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May 1998
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Mr. Emerson's Tombstone

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The Cuban Revolutions

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Playing Defense in Colorado

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A Continuing Survey of Religion and Public Life

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FIRST THINGS

May 1998 • Number 83

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FIRST THINGS

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Christianity, Judaism, and Anti-Semitism

I was unsurprised by Richard John Neuhaus' negative reaction to my book *Please Don't Wish Me a Merry Christmas: A Critical History of the Separation of Church and State* ("On Not Permitting the Other to be Other," Public Square, January). Nonetheless, I was sorely disappointed by his failure to confront my arguments in a serious fashion. Most important, Father Neuhaus asserts: "*Please Don't Wish Me a Merry Christmas*, despite its hundred pages of notes, is innocent of any engagement with biblical and historical scholarship that offers more credible accounts of the complicated relationship between Christianity and Judaism, and is dogmatically indifferent to the vast literature on the Jewish-Christian dialogue of recent decades."

I have two responses to this claim. First, I extensively document my arguments with primary and secondary sources. In detailing a connection between Christianity and anti-Semitism, I rely upon the text of the New Testament as well as numerous books by Christian and Jewish historians and theologians to show that the New Testament authors condemned Jews for refusing to accept Jesus as the messiah and that New Testament doctrine has been intimately associated with anti-Semitism for close to two millennia. . . . I quote numerous anti-Semitic passages from Christian writers, such as Augustine, Thomas Aquinas, Luther, and Calvin, who contributed significantly to the development of political theory, and I link these passages to the development of church-state relations. I understand that Fr. Neuhaus and others may not like what I am saying, but that sentiment does not invalidate it.

Second, I do not discuss sources that focus on current Jewish-Christian dialogues because, quite simply, that is not my subject. . . . Fr. Neuhaus barely mentions the main themes of my book, so it is worth clarifying what my book is really about. In the Introduction, I clearly present my theses. I begin by stating what I call the dominant story of the separation of church and state: "Nearly all discussions of the religion clauses build upon one dominant or standard story of the separation of church and state. This oft-repeated and almost universally accepted story focuses on two themes. First, the separation of church and state stands as a constitutional principle that promotes democracy and equally protects the religious freedom of all Americans, especially religious outgroups, including Jews. Second, this principle emerges as a unique American contribution to political theory."

Next I state my purpose: "My purpose in this book is to challenge the two themes of this dominant story of church and state." And in the final paragraph of the Introduction, I summarize my conclusion: "The dominant story of the separation of church and state is woefully simplistic and seriously misleading. The separation of church and state did not magically and suddenly appear in the United States, and, more important, the separation of church and state does not equally protect the religious freedom of all, including religious outgroups. . . . Moreover, the separation of church and state imposes particular costs or disadvantages on outgroups that are not similarly borne by the Christian majority. Ultimately, the dominant story of church and state is revealed to be dominant not only because it is so commonly accepted, but also because it is told from the distinct perspective of the dominant Christian majority. And telling the story of religious freedom and equality from the perspective of the dominant religion has produced a tale that is both self-congratulatory and lacking in nuance. My critical

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narrative, told from the viewpoint of an American Jew, reveals the constitutional principle of the separation of church and state to be a highly complex social phenomenon that primarily flows from and helps reproduce the Christian domination of American society and culture."...

Fr. Neuhaus suggests that I oppose "representative democracy," but of course I never say anything of the sort. Instead, I explore somewhat the emergence of the democratic state, and I examine some of the difficulties of democracy. To recognize and discuss weaknesses in a social institution is not equivalent to opposing it....

Finally, to be fair, I do agree with Fr. Neuhaus on one important point. He writes: "Christians should read *Please Don't Wish Me a Merry Christmas.* It provides a window into a way of viewing the world and the American circumstance that needs to be understood." Absolutely true!—which is why, in part, I wrote the book.

Stephen M. Feldman
College of Law
University of Tulsa
Tulsa, OK

I commend Richard John Neuhaus for his review of Professor Stephen M. Feldman's book, *Please Don't Wish Me A Merry Christmas: A Critical History of the Separation of Church and State.*

What I find offensive about Prof. Feldman's arguments, besides the fact that he is guilty of the same kind of bigotry he accuses Christians of practicing, is his ignorance of history. How can Prof. Feldman claim that anti-Semitism is a Christian invention? Long before Christianity came into existence, the Jews were brutally persecuted by the Egyptians, Amorites, Babylonians, Persians, Philistines, Greeks, Assyrians, and Romans.

Prof. Feldman is sadly mistaken if he believes that his safety as a Jew lies in the radical separation of religion from society. Modern anti-Semitism is actually secular, not religious. The word "anti-Semitism" was first invented by Wilhelm Maar, a German anti-Christian anarchist, in 1879. According to Holocaust scholar Yehuda Bauer, Maar wanted to give anti-Semitism a scientific basis and separate it from religion, which he rejected....

On a comic level, Prof. Feldman's ideas are no different than those articulated by *Seinfeld's* "Uncle Leo." If a waitress serves him a cold cup of coffee, Uncle Leo concludes that she is an "anti-Semite" who has Auschwitz on her mind. Jerry Seinfeld must be proud. His Uncle Leo got tenure, and wrote a book.

Dimitri Cavalli
Bronx, NY

RJN replies:
As I indicated in my comment, Professor Feldman has read extensively but also very tendentiously. The relationship between Christianity and Judaism is very much the subject of his book, and it is a grave failure not to have paid attention to the dialogues in which that relationship is constructively examined. It is true that the author does not *say* he opposes representative democracy, but the entire import of his argument is to oppose a polity (including church-state relations) representative of a people who happen to be mainly Christian. I thank Mr. Cavalli for his comments.

Human Dependency

Your editorial about *Roe v. Wade* ("*Roe*: Twenty-five Years Later," January) is in some respects incomplete. You correctly note that *Roe* is absurd when it implies that the fetus is unlike the neonate because it is unable to live on its own. You do not develop the further point that the same objection can be raised with regard to any human life, even the life of a middle-aged law professor. Could he survive on his own? Take away every other human being, and he would have to live on slowly rotting canned food. His only hope would be to learn or remember hunting.

Even that stored food is a human artifact, left by others. More significantly, so are the tools of hunting, and the means by which those tools can be used. Erase all other humans and those artifacts (cans, guns, traps, arrows) are also gone. What I have is mostly what others have given to me or exchanged with me. Without them I am dead, dead as one aborted. I am by any rational measure utterly dependent on others. If that dependency makes life subject to termination at will, then none of our lives has value.

Michael J. Herbert
Law School
University of Richmond
Richmond, VA

Whose Fifties?

James Nuechterlein ("The Fifties As I Never Knew Them," February) was correctly appalled by the treatment of the 1950s portrayed on the History Channel. He would be even more greatly shocked to learn that the same interpretation of the decade—dumb, repressive, vicious—appears in virtually all of the college textbooks. Betraying the leftist bias typical of American historians, these accounts invariably proceed to glorify the 1960s.

Mr. Nuechterlein contends that "scholars" are agreed that Senator Joe McCarthy was sincere in his anti-Communist efforts. Not so. Read the textbooks. I first took that position in my 1982 book, *The Life and Times of Joe McCarthy.* My conclusion was based in part on more than two hundred interviews with people who knew the Senator. But the interpretation most often used by historians comes from Richard Rovere's 1959 journalistic polemic, *Senator Joe McCarthy.* Rovere told the left what it wanted to hear, and it has stuck. This McCarthy is merely a cynical, ruthless monster....

In short, one should be skeptical when reading that "historians say," because all too often what they say is what the journalists say. And that is because they are of the same ideological bent.

Thomas C. Reeves
Professor of History
University of Wisconsin-Parkside

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James Nuechterlein replies:

Thomas C. Reeves may be pleased to know that when I wrote that "scholars have long since demonstrated that McCarthy came firmly to believe in the internal Communist threat," I had his excellent book particularly in mind. I did not say that "scholars are agreed" on the point. Scholars seldom agree on anything beyond the most obvious. But I do think that Prof. Reeves' book effectively demonstrates that his analysis is correct. I am, alas, fully aware of the dreary textbook consensus on the general awfulness of the fifties. The relationship between textbooks and disinterested scholarship is often tenuous at best.

Culture, Economics, and Politics

Two articles in the February issue raise serious questions concerning the cultural and political program endorsed by FIRST THINGS. R. R. Reno ("Good Restaurants in Gomorrah") shows how the deliberations of American Episcopalians about homosexuality are dominated by their class attitudes, and (rightly) suggests that these attitudes have narrowed the constituency to which the Episcopal Church can appeal. He retains, however, a stunning complacency about the market-based ecclesiology that pervades American discussions of religion. That Eastern Orthodoxy, Southern Baptist fundamentalism, and Orthodox Judaism do well on the religion market is, when one thinks about it, little comfort even to religious conservatives.

George Weigel ("John Paul II and the Priority of Culture") praises the Pope for discovering that culture is independent of, and prior to, economics and politics. Since some conservatives maintain that the ideas of the epoch *ought* to be those of the ruling class (and condemn intellectuals who think otherwise as smart-alecks or worse), this point is welcome. But this is no reason for sidelining "bread and butter" issues: as the Pope knows, and Aristotle, Plato, and the Hebrew prophets knew as well, a large and widening gap between rich and poor has large social, and therefore also cultural, effects.

Philip E. Devine
Professor of Philosophy
Providence College
Providence, RI

A Verdict on Abortion

As with Russell E. Saltzman ("A Fear of Abandonment," February), abortion is a personal matter to me.

In October of 1984 my wife was some four months pregnant with our second child. We were living in Connecticut, but scheduled shortly to move to the Norfolk, Va., area. A Coast Guard officer, I am reassigned every few years. While I was on a patrol in the Caribbean, a routine pregnancy check-up for Susan and the company in her womb revealed a serious problem in our unborn child. The kidneys were blocked and enlarged, and Susan was referred to Yale Medical Center. After a variety of tests in New Haven, my wife was advised that the child would live only a matter of months after birth. Matter of factly, the attending physician recommended "termination of the pregnancy." Susan responded intensely, "I won't do it." The doctor then advised that she ought to consult with her husband—though Susan knew that my reaction would have been similar to hers, if no doubt a good deal less genteel.

I found out about these events during a conversation in a phone shack on the fuel pier at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. In that talk my wife and I decided that, at least for the time being, we would call our unborn child Samuel. Though we did not yet know the sex, we did echo the promise of Hannah: "Lord, if you give me this child, I will give him back to you." Many people prayed. Checks and tests continued. There were other complications that necessitated complete bed rest for Susan and my taking forty-four days leave to be Mr. Mom.

Amid the many circumstances of these emotionally charged days, a strange phenomenon occurred. The kidneys in Samuel began to shrink. Yale had the most advanced perinatal outfit in the country, but they could not explain the change. As the time of birth drew near, Sam's kidney size was determined to be "a variant of normal." Immediately after he was born—and I do mean *immediately*—Sam made like Old Faithful and wiped out an attending physician and two nurses. I recall one exclaiming, "Get your father, not me!" It has always struck me that Sam was giving his verdict on those whose knowledge of his young life and his kidneys was a good deal less than perfect. . . .

Raymond J. Brown
Londonderry, NH

Give Now

To persons considering philanthropy, Richard John Neuhaus recommends a report, "Giving Better, Giving Smarter," published by the National Commission on Philanthropy and Civic Renewal (While We're At It, February).

I have better advice for those people: Don't wait until you die to put your money to work. Young people need training *now*. People overseas are dying from starvation and disease *now*. Prisons are filled with convicts who need spiritual guidance *now*. Terrified women are patronizing abortionists *now*. Everywhere, including the U.S., people who never heard of Jesus Christ are dying *now*.

By contributing *now* to current, pressing needs, not only can you control the use of your money but you will have the joy of seeing in your lifetime the fruit of your love for God and your fellow humans. Why wait for death? . . .

Leon O. Billig
Seattle, WA

Cooperation with Grace

Ecumenism would have been better served if the joint Evangelical-Catholic declaration "The Gift of Salvation" (January) had not declared a winner in the ancient controversy by stating, "We understand that what we here affirm is in agreement with what the Reformation

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traditions have meant by justification by faith alone (*sola fide*)." But since it has, I must protest; the rendered decision is wrong!

I quote from the declaration: "Faith is not merely intellectual assent but an act of the whole person, involving the mind, *the will*, and the affections, issuing in a changed life" (emphasis added).

The authors of *The Church's Confession of Faith: A Catholic Catechism for Adults* (Ignatius, 1987), after pointing out that the Catholic Church affirms that we are justified by faith, which is a gift of God and an unmerited grace, go on to say:

> The [Reformation] controversy especially concerns whether grace enables man to consent to his justification and *to cooperate* with it. The Reformers speak explicitly of unfree will; for them, man's full passivity in the process of justification is fundamental. In opposition to this, the Council of Trent speaks repeatedly of a human cooperation. . . . It does not mean, of course, an autonomous freedom in relation to God, but only a bestowed freedom. This way of speaking is scripturally legitimate. The apostle Paul designates himself explicitly as God's *co*worker (1 Corinthians 3:9; 2 Corinthians 6:1); he speaks of grace working with him (1 Corinthians 15:10). . . . This question of creaturely cooperation in the process of the mediation of salvation still represents a fundamental problem in relation to the Reformation.

The fact that *the will* is included in the declaration apparently removed the last objection of the Catholic signers, particularly Father Avery Dulles, author of a recent, exhaustive, and greatly appreciated study of faith (*Assurance of Things Hoped For*, Oxford University Press, 1994).

Faith can be defined in such a way that makes love and good works *necessary* consequences as implied in the phrase "a changed life," but that leads us to wonder what definition Paul had in mind when he wrote (1 Corinthians 13:13), "So faith, hope, and love remain, these three; but the greatest of these is love," and (1 Corinthians 13:2) "If I have all faith so as to move mountains but do not have love, I am nothing."

James P. Zietlow
Kalamazoo, MI

RJN replies:

James P. Zietlow's thoughtful letter reflects a concern that has also been raised by others. Speaking only for myself and not for all the signers of the statement, I would note that our Protestant theological interlocutors declare their confidence that "what we here affirm" is consistent with *sola fide*. There are no doubt some in "the Reformation traditions" who meant and mean something else by *sola fide*. The Catholic signers are responsible only for what is affirmed in "The Gift of Salvation." It should also be noted that the German catechism that Mr. Zeitlow cites has been succeeded by official dialogues that have concluded that differences over justification are no longer "fundamental" in the sense of being church-dividing.

Ethics at the End

I would like to respond to Richard John Neuhaus' comment in the Public Square (While We're At It, February) concerning an article I wrote in 1994 that was published in *RN Magazine* two years ago. His comment does not recognize the chain of decision making that I recorded in this medical situation.

The Patient Self-Determination Act of 1990 is a federal law that makes provision for patients to make written or verbal statements directing the course of their care before they become too ill to do so. This patient had clearly stated that he did not wish to be kept alive by mechanical means when there was no hope of recovery. After he had been in a Persistent Vegetative State (PVS) for several months, his family made the request to the doctors that treatment and feeding through a gastrostomy tube be stopped in accordance with the patient's wishes. The doctors carefully reviewed the case with legal and ethical experts. In addition, second medical opinions were sought and at all times the family was included in the discussions. It was decided that the patient's condition was irreversible and his stated wish for termination of life support would be honored.

After his death I spoke to the nurses who had cared for him. In accordance with the "conscience clause" in New York State law, staff had been told they could request reassignment if they had a moral objection to the procedure. All decided to remain and care for the patient. . . . I recorded the experience of the nurses because I believed it was a critically important event for them and for others. I strongly believe there is a need to ensure that nurses are aware of the decision making process, the implications of such situations, and their rights and responsibilities to themselves and the patient.

Elisabeth Ohlenberg, RN
Brooklyn, NY

RJN replies:

I have no doubt appropriate experts were consulted and gave their permission. The question is not procedural but substantive. From the article and from the above letter, it seems obvious this man was not in a PVS (a profoundly dehumanizing term). He was apparently conscious and interacting with the nurses. In any event, the wrong is in withdrawing food and fluid with the purpose of effecting the patient's death, and the wrong is not mitigated by the patient's complicity in it. The painful ordeal of twenty days described by Nurse Ohlenberg can only lead people who do not recognize the wrong to employ more efficient means for dispatching patients in similar circumstances.

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THIS TIME

The Lure of Social Democracy

James Nuechterlein

Modern American liberalism rests, at heart, on faith in the power of the federal government to solve the fundamental problems of society. The intellectual origins of that faith go back to the nineteenth century, but it first found programmatic political expression in Theodore Roosevelt's New Nationalism program outlined in 1910 and elaborated in his quixotic Bull Moose campaign for the presidency two years later. TR's 1912 Progressive Party platform—calling for expanded political democracy, government regulation of the economy, and a federal social insurance program—established a framework for liberal striving that would endure all the way through Lyndon Johnson's Great Society program of the 1960s.

In the process, the traditional liberal suspicion of strong centralized power was transmuted into a lyrical social democratic affirmation of activist government. As H. L. Mencken, in a characteristic mix of shrewdness and hyperbole, said of TR: "He didn't believe in democracy; he believed simply in government." And so he did believe—provided, of course, that government remain in the hands of wise and upright men like himself. His progressive successors kept and extended that faith.

The left's trust in government has been severely tested in recent years. Liberalism has in fact never recovered from the debacle of the Great Society, which began as a popular extension of the New Deal mood and ended in manifest failure (remember the war on poverty?), mass unrest, and bitter social divisions. (To be fair, the worst of the divisions and unrest came, Vietnam aside, on the issue of race, a problem that progressives from TR onward had largely avoided.)

The Watergate scandal diverted the nation's attention from collectivist liberalism's failure for some time, and the diversion continued during the odd and inept interlude of the Carter presidency. But the progressive paradigm had been broken, and the "L-word" had become an ideological onus from which prudent politicians carefully distanced themselves. By the mid-1980s Ronald Reagan had captured the political high ground with the rhetoric of conservative restorationism: limited government, federalism, reduced government spending, lower tax rates. Government, he persuaded a majority of Americans, generated more problems than solutions. Finally, the collapse of Marxism—and with it of the socialist dream—seemed the definitive judgment on the collectivist faith. When President Clinton, heir to the progressive tradition, announced to the nation a few years ago that the era of big government was over, he did so to bipartisan applause.

But things are not quite so simple. Government Lite has its political uses in the current climate, but it is unlikely to satisfy for very long the yearnings that bring liberals into politics in the first place: you don't get much ideological mileage out of campaigns for school uniforms and midnight basketball. Indeed, a liberalism that doesn't believe in government doesn't make much sense. That's what we have conservatives for. There is good reason to believe that for liberals the era of big government, far from being over, is only temporarily in abeyance.

One sign of the continuing lure of social democracy is Alan Wolfe's op-ed essay in the March 15 *New York Times* bemoaning our "Couch Potato Politics." Mr. Wolfe, a professor of sociology at Boston University, has over the years written intelligently on the decline of the left both here and in Europe, but, judging from his *Times'* essay, he has not forsaken his own faith in the efficacy of government activism. Once a social democrat, it seems, always a social democrat.

Professor Wolfe begins with an ostensible paradox: "The American political system seems to work best when the American economy is performing at its worst." Thus the depression-era 1930s witnessed the creative innovations of Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal, while the 1950s, by contrast, was a decade "of great prosperity but also of bland politics." As a matter of fact, Wolfe's model doesn't hold up very well: he admits the exception of the 1960s—"a period of economic expansion that coincided with a vibrant [!] politics"—and he overlooks the progressive era, a period both of prosperity and of the liberal reforms of TR and Woodrow Wilson.

Be that as it may, Prof. Wolfe is concerned with our current state. The nineties are like the fifties: "Our economy is the envy of the world . . . yet our political system seems deader than dead." What he describes as "apathy" has, Wolfe concedes, its virtues. America has been spared "the passionate politics associated with sectarian strife." For all its faults, "the American system works." But it depresses him that the middle-class citizens he has recently been interviewing (see RJN's related comment in While We're At It) lack "a shared sense of national purpose."

Americans, Wolfe says, like to invoke the concept of "responsibility" when attacking welfare or praising entrepreneurial initiative, but they "refuse to accept the responsibilities of national citizenship." "Prosperity, which gives us the opportunity to pay for

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a sense of national purpose, detracts from our ability to articulate a sense of national purpose." Our economic success "has made us a good society . . . but we will not be a great society until our political will matches our economic abilities." Lyndon Johnson couldn't have said it better.

Prof. Wolfe muddies the waters by denying that our current divisions occur between liberals who favor government and conservatives who oppose it. Liberals and conservatives differ instead, he says, over the issues on which they would prefer government to focus its attention. The left cares about "economic or racial inequality," while the right concentrates on the collapse of the family, high crime rates, educational failure, and "the triumph of secular humanism." Neither side, Wolfe argues, cares about the issues of the other. The result is stalemate.

It is true enough that liberals and conservatives operate at cross-purposes, but they do not equally look to government to champion their causes. Efforts to eliminate racial or economic inequalities would indeed require massive government intervention, but conservatives argue that solutions to their problems require that government get out of the way, that, at the least, it not act in ways that make matters worse. They look to affirmative government action only, in Wolfe's litany of their concerns, on the issue of crime, and no one left or right has ever denied government's necessary role in preserving public order. Most conservatives understand that, given the conditions of modern industrialized society, government will inevitably be big. But they are ever vigilant that it not become gargantuan.

Wolfe's vision of a "great society" and his repeated invocations of a "sense of national purpose" are commonplaces of social democratic thought, and they suggest the perpetual latent utopianism in the politics of the left. Liberals want an activist government because they believe that a proper politics requires high ends and noble purposes, deep commitments and grand passions. A politics that does not dream of New Jerusalems is an inadequate politics.

Conservatives, by contrast—at least conservatives of a Burkean persuasion—are instinctively mistrustful of great societies (they shudder at memories of the sixties) and disinclined to think it the job of government, except in periods of crisis, to generate a sense of national purpose. As British Prime Minister Harold Macmillan once remarked, people in search of purpose should consult their archbishops.

But it is unlikely that such cautionary notes can ever fully register with committed social democrats. To ask them to give up the politics of greatness is in effect to ask them to give up politics altogether. F1

Inheritance

Psalm 82

Those with heaps of money, made
Or born to it, though they play
With bankers, senators, with generals,
Like gods to mortals, while they
Stroll in knots through crowded halls
Where others bustle, they are judged
Rejected by what they don't know,
And think because they can command
They are beloved. Not for long.
Time to stand up for the put-upon,
Who must believe the bad do well
Because they would be gods, as I am
Certain all of us are children
Of the Lord, but also humans
Who will die, will fall like rulers
From the high seat to a black hole:
Wake up, judge, the gods decay
And leave the earth for you.

Laurance Wieder

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Opinion

Gays Marrying

Gilbert Meilaender

There are moments when a person says something that should have been obvious but which has been left unsaid—and we wonder why the rest of us have failed to see or say it. That, at least in part, is my reaction to a thesis put forward by Jonathan Mills in a little book titled *Love, Covenant & Meaning* (published by Regent College Publishing, where Mills teaches). The subtitle of the book—"Why are Liberals and Conservatives Conspiring to Prevent 'Homosexual' Men from Marrying?"—may seem more intriguing. The book is straightforwardly written though not especially well written, is aimed principally at pastors, and deals almost exclusively with gay men rather than lesbians.

"The basic thing I want to say," Mills writes, "is that the presence of 'homosexual' desires in a man does not make him incapable of marrying and raising a family." That is why I write here of "gays marrying" and not of "gay marriage." Mills' claim is that both "liberal" and "conservative" Christians turn out to share an attitude that burdens and harms "homosexual" men. Beginning from the premise that marriage is an expression of our sexuality, both sides unwittingly cooperate in keeping men who experience sexual attraction for other men from marrying and raising a family. The one side does this by suggesting that such men have no capacity for marriage and that their sexuality must be "expressed" genitally with other men. The other side agrees that such men, as they are, have no capacity for marriage and claims that their sexuality must be altered—so that, as Mills likes to put it, "their adulterous sexual desires toward men [are transformed] into adulterous sexual desires toward women," at which point they will be deemed to have the capacity for marriage!

Mills argues, in fact, that neither research nor common sense suggests "that 'homosexual' men lack what is necessary to choose to be good husbands and to raise their families well. Most men have the capacity for sexual relations both with men and with women." Men are for Mills "the chaos gender"; their sexual desires (after the Fall) are anarchic, to say the least.

Take those men whom we call heterosexual. Out of their (hetero)sexual appetities we cannot, Mills argues, construct faithful, monogamous marriage. If they manage such marriage it is because they have restrained and transcended their appetites. For "heterosexualness in a man is much more likely to *dissolve* his marriage than to bind him to his wife." Hence, "homosexual" and "heterosexual" men stand in pretty much the same position in relation to marriage. The appetites of neither draw them solely in that direction. Each needs what marriage and family paradigmatically provide: a "higher purposiveness" that can "elevate his life from aimless individualism."

"Shouldn't we," Mills writes, "at least be asking whether the transcending of venereal desire that marriage requires of a mostly or entirely 'heterosexual' man who marries for the sake of love, friendship, and raising a family isn't more or less the same as the transcendence required of a man whose venereal desire is 'oriented' mostly or entirely toward men but who restrains these drives, and who marries for the sake of love, friendship, and raising a family?"

This is a question worthy of our attention and reflection. It will not suffice in response to say that some men with strong "homosexual" desires would be unhappy in marriage, for so are many "heterosexual" men. Nor, as Mills notes, can the successful marriages of "homosexual" men be studied, because they will be defined as "heterosexual."

There are, however, some complicated problems raised by Mills' thesis, and, helpful and provocative as his argument is, we need to put some questions to it. Central to his argument is that we need to break free of our tendency to regard marriage as the "expression" and fulfillment of our sexual nature. Indeed, he contends that such an understanding of marriage is as foreign to the Bible as to other ancient cultures. In our culture it is largely an inheritance from the enormous influence of Rousseau, for whom the sexual drive was the only force that could bring human beings out of individualistic isolation into society.

Certainly Mills is right that in most societies marriage has been understood not chiefly as a community of romantic love but as an institution for the begetting and rearing of children. And I, at least, would grant that much of the fragility of marriage in our culture is due to the fact that we have lost that deep sense of its biological ground and necessity. When it becomes simply a project of two people, a project aimed primarily at their fulfillment and satisfaction, marriage loses much of its high seriousness and purpose. All that is true. But that does not mean that our creation as male and female—with marriage as the typical though not necessary expression of that creation—is unimportant to human identity. Mills is forced to argue that marriage is "an identity in covenant and intentional purposes (belonging, friendship, raising a family)" and not an "erotic identity." It would on his view be better if all marriages developed from friend-

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ship rather than from erotic attraction.

I am not persuaded. That marriage is a covenant in which we vow faithfulness is surely right. That the vow is the most important thing about marriage is also right. But that does not mean it is right to "argue that in light of the Scriptures, the human being is not a *sexual* being but a choosing being." Human beings are more than their rational wills; they are also passionate beings and are personally present not only in their rational choices but in their passions. Mills is, essentially, returning to Augustine's view of what (unfallen) sexual experience would be like, when Adam and Eve would have engaged in sexual relations when their rational wills told them to set to work to make a child. I always take Augustine seriously enough not simply to dismiss what he says, but here, I think, he is wrong. Not wrong to connect our sexuality with what he understands the human person to be. But wrong to think that the person is present only in the rational will and not also in the passions. Indeed, it is because in their sexual embrace a man and woman must set aside their chosen projects, step out of themselves, and give themselves to each other, that the child is not their product but a gift.

This inability to see anything positive in the passions is related to Mills' tendency to equate sexual appetite (or lust) with erotic love. He argues—wrongly, I think, though I do not know exactly how to test the hypothesis—that sexual relations with the same woman "soon becomes unexciting, though it may remain delightfully affectionate" even for "heterosexual" men. He does not, so far as I can tell, distinguish between appetite, which simply lusts after all attractive women, and eros, which desires a particular beloved. His only categories are appetite (which desires any appealing woman) and will (which makes covenant possible). But between the two, eros intervenes. It personalizes and humanizes our animal appetites in such a mysterious way that a man now desires not just any woman but one. That desire, of course, is not always faithful. The chaos to which Mills points remains. And hence, as appetite is personalized by eros, so eros in turn must be made steadfast by covenant. But, however important covenant is—and I have granted that it is central and primary—we should not emphasize it in a manner that denies the importance of erotic attraction.

What this means for Mills' thesis I am not sure. It need not, however, undercut the fundamental sanity of Mills' argument and its power as cultural critique. The central place given to the language of "orientation" in discussions of sexuality has probably been mistaken, and we ought to be grateful to Mills for reminding us of much that we should not have left unsaid.

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Babel Undone

Richard J. Mouw

A few decades ago I published a short piece in *Christianity Today* about something I had observed on a Chicago expressway. I had been following a car that exhibited a *Playboy* bunny decal in its rear window; then as I went to pass the car I also noticed a plastic statue of Mary on its dashboard. My published reflections were meant to be lighthearted, although they now strike me as a bit too smart-alecky. Was there some intra-family compromise at work here, I wondered—between, say, a would-be Hugh Hefner and his pious wife? No, I opined, this must be an expression of some profound theological perspective—and I went on to play around with some Tillichian and Bultmannian possibilities.

Even though I was simply trying to pull off a bit of theological humor, my attempt to do so was based on an important assumption: that the juxtaposition of these two seemingly conflicting images required some kind of coherent explanation. Either the car's symbol system was a battleground between different persons with different value systems, or the symbols did in fact cohere, in a way not immediately apparent, within a single person's perspective on reality. What I did not take seriously as an option was that these symbols were indeed incompatible and yet were held simultaneously and sincerely by the same person.

This latter option seems much more plausible for me today. The leader of an evangelical ministry on university campuses told me a while back that his organization is struggling with difficult questions about how to present the claims of the Christian faith to present-day students. In the not so distant past, he observed, evangelicals would employ an apologetic approach that placed a strong emphasis on the coherence of a Christian view of reality. The biblical perspective was shown to tie things together, to answer adequately more questions than other worldviews. Such an approach challenged students to make a clear choice between Christianity and, say, a naturalistic or an Eastern religious perspective. But today's students don't seem to put much stock in coherence and consistency. They think nothing of participating in an evangelical Bible study on Wednesday night and then engaging in a New Age meditation group on Thursday night, while spending their daily jogging time listening to a taped reading of *The Celestine Prophecy*—without any sense that there is anything inappropriate about moving in and out of these very different perspectives on reality.

This syndrome was brought home to me in a poignant manner a while back when I was a guest on a radio talk show. It was during a time when

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two major newsmagazines had just run feature articles about "the historical Jesus," and the host was quite eager to discuss the topic. My fellow guest was a church leader of liberal bent, and he expressed strong skepticism about the reliability of the New Testament accounts of the resurrection of Jesus—an assessment with which I strongly disagreed. When we opened the discussion to questions from our listening audience, one of our callers was a young woman who was identified as Heather from Glendale. "I'm not what you would call, like, a Christian," Heather began. "Actually, right now I am sort of into—you know, witchcraft and stuff like that? But I agree with the guy from Fuller Seminary. I'm just shocked that someone would, like, say that Jesus wasn't really raised from the dead!"

I was taken aback by Heather's way of offering support for my position. Her comment still strikes me as rather bizarre. And the more I have thought about what Heather said, the more I worry about her and what she represents in contemporary culture. To be sure, I am not as shocked by this phenomenon as I would have been in the days when I wondered about the juxtaposition of *Playboy* decals and plastic Madonnas. Indeed, I can imagine having a rather enjoyable conversation with Heather from Glendale. In the account given in Acts 17, the Apostle Paul was engaged in what looked like a productive and friendly dialogue with some Athenian philosophers until he told them about the resurrection of Jesus; then many of them began to ridicule him. The narrator adds, however, that "others said, 'We will hear you again about this'" (Acts 17:32); some of these latter folks, we are told, eventually became believers. I have often wondered what the conversation was like when Paul talked further to these pagan inquirers intrigued by the idea of Jesus' resurrection. Maybe a conversation with Heather from Glendale would give me a feel for the tone of that dialogue.

But for all of that I do worry about Heather. I am concerned about the way she seems to be piecing together a set of convictions to guide her life. While I did not have the opportunity to quiz her about the way in which she makes room in her psyche for an endorsement of both witchcraft and the Gospel's resurrection narratives, I doubt that Heather suscribes to both views of reality, Wicca and Christianity, in their robust versions. She is placing fragments of worldviews side by side without thinking about their incompatibility. And it is precisely the fact that these disconnected cognitive bits coexist in her consciousness that causes my concern.

While I worry about Heather's inner life, I am also concerned about the larger moral and spiritual context that has contributed to her psychic confusion. There is a sense in which Heather is a microcosm—or a microchaos—of the larger culture.

Back in 1990 *Harper's* magazine invited five specialists on urban life to discuss what is, and what is not, happening in America's public spaces today. The editors asked the experts to address in particular the decline of public life that is resulting in the "debauched public discourse" of talk radio and *Jerry Springer*-type TV shows. The assembled experts included two architects, one urban planner, a sociologist, and a sculptor, so they naturally paid special attention to the physical dimensions of urban life. And while the experts did not agree among themselves about how best to construct a healthy public space, they were unanimous in thinking that things are not well in our urban communities. Nor were they confident that our problems will be solved by better urban planning alone. As one of the architects put it, "What we long for in the design of our public space and in the character of our public life is not fragmentation and difference but a sense of what we have in common while knowing our difference—a sense of wholeness."

This larger picture can be seen writ small in Heather's inner landscape. She experiences "fragmentation and difference" within her inner world. She lacks a sense of commonness, of wholeness, in her psyche. And her individualized fragmentation mirrors the larger cultural brokenness.

The disturbing thing is that there are intellectual leaders who celebrate this kind of disconnected selfhood. Take the case of Kenneth Gergen, a psychologist who has written a much-discussed study of contemporary selfhood, *The Saturated Self: Dilemmas of Identity in Contemporary Life* (1991). Gergen argues that traditional conceptions of how to understand personhood—namely, that we do or do not have souls or unconscious minds, that people have "intrinsic worth" or "inherent rationality"—have been exposed by "the postmodern turn" as inappropriate. These are, after all, ways of talking, not reflections of the actual nature of persons. In contrast to the narrow range of options and the oppressive restraints favored by "totalizing" systems of understanding, postmodernism opens the way to the full expression of all discourses, to a free play of discourses. From this way of viewing things, we help people best, says Gergen, by inviting them into an "endless wandering in the maze of meaning," in which they regularly experience "the breaking down of oppositions."

To be sure, Gergen wants individuals to find some way of blending, through both internal and external dialogues, various "richly elaborated discourses into new forms of serious games that can take us beyond text and into life." But it is not clear exactly what standards are to guide this process in a world in which all comparative judgments are arbitrary, indeed "imperialistic." Why should my Dodger-fan self have any less status in my life than the self that senses a need to serve the poor? Why should I prefer any instinct or preference over any other one? In such a world, what is the difference between a healthy and an unhealthy self?

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Similar problems face us on the collective level. When Phyllis Trible, a well-known Old Testament scholar, completed her term as president of the Society of Biblical Literature a few years ago, she observed that the field of biblical studies is presently in a chaotic state. "Gone are the days," she said, "when the Society could define itself in rather precise and limited ways. Competing voices, tongues, and the confusion of tongues have extended research almost without limits." And while some scholars lament this situation, there are many others "who rejoice in the loss of a center, seeing it as the demise of a privileged point of view. Far from despairing, they encourage the celebration of chaos."

Trible's comments are directed to a specific field of academic studies, but her description can be taken as a fairly accurate portrayal of the larger cultural scene in North America. While many people complain about a widespread loss of a sense of centeredness, others rejoice in this loss, celebrating the chaos. For these celebrants it is good to be rid of the conviction that the array of conflicting perspectives and convictions can be confidently assessed from a standpoint of epistemic privilege.

Trible alludes in passing to the image of Babel in her comments about the "confusion of tongues" in contemporary biblical studies. In his book *Ethics after Babel*, Jeffrey Stout uses that image more extensively, arguing that our contemporary cultural situation is one for which the biblical image of the Tower of Babel can serve as a "trope." In Stout's account of our moral situation, the Babel of our moral diversity is haunted by three "specters"—"skepticism, nihilism, and relativism"—that are causing what he sees as "worrisome effects on how we live our lives." While Stout refuses to give in to the threat of these three specters, he still assumes the backdrop of Babel, arguing that we can develop a workable moral discourse by a pragmatic process that he describes as "moral bricolage": a kind of moral puttering, a piecing things together by drawing on whatever odds and ends that are available.

Stout is quite right when he says that "we are all bricoleurs, insofar as we are capable of of creative thought at all." I certainly am, and I am very aware of the fact that my habits of bricolage are shaped by many of the cultural factors that are celebrated by the postmodern anti-"imperialists." There are significant ways in which I am very pleased to be engaged in bricolage. I am a traditional Calvinist in my theology, but my Calvinism is not, nor should it be, of the exact vintage of my forebears. I have had many more opportunities than they could have imagined to enter into serious dialogue with other kinds of Protestants, Roman Catholics, Eastern Orthodox, and Jews; and I have come away from those encounters with new theological odds and ends to incorporate into my understanding of reality.

My own experience, then, can be seen as confirming Stout's hypothesis that it is possible to piece together a workable moral perspective in the midst of Babel. But I am not content to leave it there. In the Christian scriptures, there is a more profound corrective to Babel's chaos: Pentecost was God's reversal of Babel. There the confusion of tongues was replaced by effective communication. On that founding event of the Christian church, multiculturalism was not eradicated, but people were nonetheless capable of understanding each other: "Are not all these who are speaking Galilieans? And how is it that we hear, each of us in our own native language? . . . [I]n our own languages we hear them speaking about God's deeds of power" (Acts 2:7-11).

I take the Pentecostal alternative to Babel seriously, because I believe the miracle of Pentecost really did happen. But I also believe that it can serve as an alternative trope for anyone who refuses to allow Babel to function as the normative image for the human condition. Babel represents one kind of multiculturalism. It posits an irreducible diversity, a loss of common patterns of understanding; Babel confuses, divides, and erects barriers. Pentecost, on the other hand, represents a very different kind of multiculturalism. The Pentecostal experience does not eliminate the diversity of tongues, but it provides us with the ability to communicate across linguistic and cultural boundaries. Pentecost heals, unites, and promotes understanding.

It is these Pentecostal convictions that I would bring to my dialogue with Heather from Glendale. I would probe for what she might see as the deeper connections—however confused she might be in describing them—between her apparently disconnected odds and ends. I would offer her the promise, not of a mere mingling of disparate cognitive claims as she walks through the maze, but of an integrated selfhood.

Albert Borgmann, who teaches philosophy at the University of Montana, wrote an excellent book, *Crossing the Postmodern Divide*, a few years ago in which he discusses the ways in which the postmodern consciousness often limits its attention to the surfaces of reality. He addresses this malady with a call to rediscover "the eloquence of things" in their particularity, to recognize "the things that command our respect and grace our life," and help us to find "the depth of the world." This is what I hope for in Heather from Glendale's psyche. And it is also what I hope for in our larger culture.

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Go Ahead, Offend Me

Frederica Mathewes-Green

Last spring saw a free-for-all break out in the evangelical Protestant camp over a proposed new "inclusive language" translation of the New International Version Bible. While *World* magazine, which sounded the alarm, was scolded for joining battle in hysterical and sarcastic tones, the translators were compelled to explain in what sense it was "accurate" to render masculine terms neuter, singulars plural, or produce grammatical whimsies like "everyone . . . they."

As the battle broke open, I found that I wasn't wholeheartedly on either side. On the one hand, I'm a living-language Philistine; I believe that a language in use will be in change, and that this organic process must be accommodated. It's futile to fight it. Friends with sensibilities purer than mine protest that we can't allow ungainly, PC-inspired language changes to occur, but in many cases it's simply impossible to prevent them. Some "improvements" are too awkward to gain common use, but when a language shift catches on, it has to run its course. Sometimes, as in the case of the short-lived term "groovy," the word can be toddling out the door within a year. Sometimes, as in the case of the current redefinition of the word "gay," resistance is futile. Anyone who insists on using "gay" to mean "blithe" is begging to be immediately misunderstood and snickered at.

Thus, I recognize that "man" is no longer a coherent synonym for humankind, and I have long avoided it (and other masculine generics) in my writing. Some of my friends are mounting the barricades on this one, because it is a fine and dignified word with excellent credentials, but I think that battle is over. Not that we have to expunge it from our past, retitling books and recarving plaques, ripping the guts from idiomatic sayings; there may even still arise occasions of such dignity that no feebler substitute will do. But in ordinary speech and contemporary writing, most of us have grudgingly learned to avoid using the impolite, impolitic "man."

No, there aren't any good equivalents. "People" is unmelodious; "humankind" is overly earnest; "folks" is unsuitable for situations that don't include a hayride. Too bad. For the time being, people who write about people can't use masculine-flavored group nouns. They won't be clearly understood, and the purpose of writing is communication.

But our own original writing is one thing; translation is another. Like it or not, the Bible frequently uses masculine generics in the original languages. Some partisans in the inclusive language debate insist that we must therefore use masculine generics, like "man," in order to be faithful to Scripture. But this principle of exacting literalism is unevenly applied. The original languages of the Bible also use different terms for singular and plural "you," yet even the most emphatic proponents of literal translation aren't insisting we go back to "thee" and "thou." They acknowledge that archaic, discarded terms can't be resurrected, even if they're more precise. In modern Bibles "you" is used for both singular and plural, and the reader is dependent on footnotes when the distinction is significant (as in Luke 22:31-32).

It's a judgment call, but I believe that here again "man" is now archaic, and should be dealt with the same way. But what about gender-specific words that aren't outdated, words still in everyday use—*a* man, he, his, brother? Should these be avoided, so that women know they're included?

Speaking as one of the party whose tender feelings are under consideration, I don't *want* the Bible rewritten so it won't offend women. I think the Bible *should* offend women. It should offend men, figure skaters, plumbers, headwaiters, Alaskans, Ethiopians, baton twirlers, Jews, and Gentiles. If it's not offending people, it's not doing its job.

The Bible, that powerful book, has many effects: it comforts, counsels, instructs, and brings us into the presence of God. But trying to erase offense as one of its functions is a fundamentally misguided task. Where the original language uses a generic term for humans, don't cling to outmoded "man." Where it uses a specifically masculine term, respect that puzzling fact and leave it alone. We don't know enough to change it. We're not as smart as we think we are.

Almost twenty-four years ago I walked into a church in Dublin a Hindu, and walked out a Christian. I had had an unexpected confrontation with the presence of One I discovered to be my Lord, and was set reeling. I knew I needed operating instructions quickly, and particularly wanted to find out who this Jesus was. I hunted up a Bible, a pocket-sized King James with print several microns high, and plunged into the Gospel of Matthew.

I disliked it from the start. Jesus was often abrupt and hard-edged. I disagreed with some of the things he said. I was offended.

But something had happened in my heart. The confrontation in the church had knocked a hole in my ego. I knew at last that I didn't make the world, I didn't know everything, and it was time for me to sit down, shut up, and listen. I kept working my way through the Gospels, and they began working their way through me. There are still parts of the Bible I don't like. But I *like* the parts I don't like, because I know that's where I need to listen harder.

Again, there's nothing wrong with giving a neu-

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tral biblical term a neutral English equivalent. For example, when Caiaphas says, "It is expedient that one man should die for the people," he uses the Greek term *anthropos*, not *aner*; this could acceptably be, "It is expedient that one person die."

The problem comes when the original writer chose a specifically masculine term. Psalm 1 begins, "Blessed is the man who walks not in the counsel of the wicked." He could have written "people who," but he didn't. If we correct him according to dictates of modern fashion, what might we lose? We lose touch with the ancient and continuous historical understanding that this verse prefigures the One who is righteous, Christ the Lord. We lose the bracing image of one solitary figure standing against widespread evil, diluting him into a vague mass.

Scrupulous anxiety about offending women is offensive to this woman. If someone thinks I'm incapable of reading "Blessed is the man" and figuring out it applies to me too, I'm insulted. Besides, updating gender references won't go very far toward a goal of making the Bible palatable. Someone who balks at "a man" is really going to be thrown for a loop when she hits "Take up your cross."

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Revolutionary of the Heart

Geoffrey B. Gneuhs

Since John Cardinal O'Connor's announcement at his Sunday Mass on November 9, 1997 at St. Patrick's Cathedral that he was going to discuss Dorothy Day (1897-1980) as a candidate for canonization, there has been a great deal of comment on the subject in both the religious and secular media.

Not all of that comment has been well informed. The week following the Cardinal's announcement, I happened to catch a call-in talk show on National Public Radio about the issue. One caller blasted Dorothy for having been anti-union; another, an avowed atheist, insisted in near-apoplectic exasperation that if the Church was going to canonize Dorothy, then "it should canonize Eleanor Roosevelt."

That neither caller mentioned anything to do with the Church's understanding of sanctity was not surprising; that some Catholics voicing opinions about Dorothy's possible canonization have not done so, however, is. Many liberal Catholics count her as their hero and inspiration while discounting or ignoring her profound spirituality and her gutsy orthodox faith. Indeed, over the years many writers, historians, and activists—even some members of the Catholic Worker movement she founded—have viewed Dorothy only in terms of politics (leftist politics) and that is simply wrong.

True, in her youth she was a leftist and in a knee-jerk manner went along with the liberal causes of the day. She was a protester against World War I, a suffragist, and a writer for left-wing journals. She also became pregnant out of wedlock; told by her lover to get an abortion or else he would leave her, she did. He left her anyway.

Sixty years later at her wake at Maryhouse, one of the shelters she had founded for the homeless, Abbie Hoffman, an icon of the left, declared, as he waited in line to view her coffin, that Dorothy was the "first hippie." Such silliness only underscores the superficiality of those who see her in terms of politics. The reality is that her passion was not politics but love, divine love, and that what she advocated was a revolution of the heart.

By the mid-1920s Dorothy had already distanced herself from the Greenwich Village scene, which had included among others Eugene O'Neill, who had been in love with her. She had published a novel, sold the movie rights to it, and was living with her common-law husband, Forster Batterham, an atheist and an anarchist, on Staten Island. In late 1926 she was pregnant with their child. Years later, in her book *Union Square to Rome*, she wrote, "I knew that I was going to have my baby baptized a Catholic, cost what it may. I knew that I was not going to have her floundering through as many years as I had done, doubting and hesitating, undisciplined and amoral." She described her daughter's birth in March 1927 as "a stupendous fact of creation. . . . God pity the woman who does not feel the fear, the awe, and the joy of bringing a child into the world."

One day shortly afterward, while out walking in Tottenville, Staten Island, Dorothy saw two nuns and approached them, asking them how one could become a Catholic. Prior to this incident Dorothy had had furtive contact with Catholicism. In her Village days after a night of partying, she often found herself in the early morning in St. Joseph's Church; she was drawn to the ritual of the Mass and to the artwork in the church. Afterwards, she lived briefly in New Orleans and would visit the cathedral, where a woman once gave her a rosary. Praying the rosary later became a regular part of Dorothy's prayer life. Ed Forand, a thirty-eight-year veteran of the *Catholic Worker* newspaper, remembers that each afternoon in the midst of preparing the evening meal for the community, he and others would join Dorothy upstairs in the office to say the rosary.

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Dorothy was attracted to the Church for several reasons, one of which was the physical richness of its life—its signs, symbols, customs, and rituals. A passionate woman, she was attracted to beauty. She liked to quote Dostoevsky: "Beauty will save the world." At the same time, she felt herself in a state of spiritual anxiety. Like two other great converts in this century, G. K. Chesterton and Bernard Nathanson, Dorothy recognized her sinfulness and yearned for forgiveness; only the Church, she believed, could give her the forgiveness she needed. In her autobiography, *The Long Loneliness*, she wrote that she had "reached the point where I wanted to obey. . . . I was tired of following the devices of my own heart, of doing what I wanted to do, what my desires told me to do, which always seemed to lead me astray."

Dorothy had her baby baptized first and then a few months later, in December 1927, was herself baptized. Forster, rabidly anti-Catholic, left her and their baby. But for Dorothy there was no turning back—she would listen to God, to the Church. She never regretted her decision to convert. She wrote: "I wanted to be poor, chaste, obedient. I wanted to die in order to live, to put off the old man and put on Christ. I loved, in other words, and like all women in love I wanted to be united to my love. . . . I loved the Church for Christ made visible." The Catholic Church, she said, was the church of the poor. In her study of St. Thèrése de Lisieux, she explained, "The heart filled with love searches for someone on whom to bestow it."

The next five years were not easy for her; she agonized over how to live out her faith, her concern for the poor, and her commitment to justice. Leftist ideology was too empty and abstract; it was without spirit and, most importantly for her, denied the transcendent. Then, on a December afternoon in 1932, Peter Maurin, a French peasant emigré, ex-Christian Brother and teacher, arrived at her apartment on East Fifteenth Street. She later wrote, "He showed me the way . . . his ideas and vision would dominate the rest of my life." He introduced her to the social teaching of the Church, to the doctrine of the common good of St. Thomas Aquinas, to the English Distributists like Chesterton, Eric Gill, and Hilaire Belloc, and to the lives of the saints. He called his philosophy personalism, which was shortly thereafter expounded by Emmanuel Mounier and Jacques Maritain, both of whom later published in the *Catholic Worker*.

Personalism rejected the welfare state, a creation of the modern era that had taken away the responsibilty of individuals for one another. Dorothy derisively referred to it as "Holy Mother the State," or the "Servile State," in the words of Belloc. She wrote that "Peter did not wish to turn to the government for funds. 'He who is a pensioner of the State is a slave of the State.'" Her critique of the New Deal was that it did not offer ownership. "We believe in worker ownership of the means of production and distribution as distinguished from nationalization. . . . Property is proper to man." Bill Kauffman has rightly observed that Dorothy's distributism was kindred to the manifesto of Allen Tate and the Southern Agrarians, and that "she was more at home with these people than she ever was with Manhattan socialists." Dorothy and Peter founded the *Catholic Worker* newspaper in 1933 precisely to present the Church's social teaching and to counter the influence of communism, fascism, and other statist doctrines.

Dorothy's daily life began with prayer and ended with prayer—including reading of the Psalms, Mass, and vespers. She regularly confessed and made retreats. For Dorothy no kingdom was worth striving for unless it was grounded in such a regimen. To be in her presence when she kneeled in prayer was to experience a woman who talked with God. Remembering her conversion, she wrote, "Most cradle Catholics have gone through, or need to go through, a second conversion which binds them with a more mature love and obedience to the Church"—which, by the way, she unabashedly called "the one true Church."

In a conversation with Robert Coles, the eminent child psychiatrist at Harvard, Dorothy said, "I have never wanted to challenge the Church. . . . I was trying to be a loyal servant of the Church Jesus had founded." She never questioned the Magisterium nor would she ever countenance any protest against the Church or any attempt to inject politics into the Mass. In a journal entry of January 1967 she wrote: "It makes me sick to see priests go all romantic over revolution . . . knowing nothing of genuine nonviolence. . . . Every revolution has . . . led to another revolt down through the centuries. People are losing sight of the primacy of the spiritual."

She became very disenchanted with the antiwar movement of the 1960s, which she and the *Catholic Worker* had helped start—the first draft-card burners were from the *CW*. Several years later Dorothy confided to her dear friend Maisie Ward her regret over her role in antiwar protest: the movement had become violent and many Catholic protesters had lost their faith and turned away from the Church.

Dorothy also regretted many of the changes in the Church after Vatican II—many not prescribed or intended by the Council but which have been intitiated by those who claim to know the "spirit of the Council." In a letter to a priest friend of hers in 1973, she wrote, "I miss . . . Tenebrae, for instance, and Ember Days, Benediction. . . . When I'm driving around with Stanley [Visnewski] on a shopping trip we sing hymns to Our Lady in Latin so as not to forget them. They take so much breath I wonder why my grandchildren have to go in for Zen breathing exercises."

Moreover, she felt the Church must make a bold witness against the casualness and hedonism of American society. She meditated on this in an open

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letter to Father Daniel Berrigan, S.J., in the December 1972 issue of the *Catholic Worker*: "And so when it comes to divorce, birth control, abortion, I must write in this way: The teaching of Christ, the Word, must be upheld. Held up, though one would think that it is completely beyond us—out of our reach, impossible to follow. . . . We may stretch toward it, falling short, failing seventy times seven, but forgiveness is always there. . . . I believe in the sacraments. I believe the priest is empowered to forgive sins."

Liberal Catholics like to point out that Dorothy was not afraid to be critical of the Church. That is true, but one of the incidents they most like to cite in fact reveals her love for the Church and her respect for Church authority. In March 1951, during Francis Cardinal Spellman's tenure as Archbishop of New York, Dorothy received a letter from Monsignor Edward Gaffney, asking her to "drop by" the chancery. During their meeting he informed her that she would have to cease publication of *CW* or change the name of the newspaper—"Catholic" could not be used. Dorothy went home to discuss with the *CW* staff what response to give to the monsignor. In her journal she wrote: "Mike Harrington [later author of *The Other America*] urges me to fortitude and the fighting of obscurantism in the Church." (Shortly thereafter, incidentally, Harrington ended his brief stint at the *CW*, complaining that Dorothy was not a socialist and was too Catholic.)

Several days later Dorothy sent her response to Gaffney. "First of all," she wrote, "I wish to assure you of our love and respectful obedience to the Church, and our gratitude to this Archdiocese, which has often and so generously defended us from many who attack us." As to the use of the word "Catholic," she suggested that "I am sure no one thinks the Catholic War Veterans (who also use the name Catholic) represent the point of view of the Archdiocese any more than they think the *Catholic Worker* does." She then dutifully requested a list of any scholarly mistakes or theological or spiritual errors the paper might have propounded. She slyly added that if *CW* were to cease publication, that "would be a grave scandal to our readers and would put into the hands of our enemies, the enemies of the Church, a formidable weapon." She concluded the letter by promising to try to become a better editor. She never heard again from Monsignor Gaffney.

Dorothy was often asked what she would have done if the Cardinal had insisted that she close down the *CW*. She told Robert Coles she would have obeyed—but would have also invited the *CW* readership, some ninety thousand, to join her in a day of fasting and prayer at St. Patrick's Cathedral.

Dorothy was a Christian personalist. She never identified with such feminist issues as women's ordination. She gratefully called herself a "daughter of the Church," writing, "I love the Church [that] has room for saints and sinners, for the mediocre, the lame, the halt, the blind. . . . I still like the expression Holy Mother the Church." The Church was the mother that enabled her to find love in community. Her orthodox faith and selfless love remain prophetically radical—radical in the truest sense of that abused word. She went to the roots of the Church's teachings and cultivated community. She went beyond the cant and clichés of liberalism and transcended the vacuities of self-indulgent secularism.

Dorothy criticized extreme capitalism and militarism (as has every modern Pope). Does that make her a leftist? She decried the welfare state and massive government for depersonalizing culture. Does that make her a rightist? Dorothy confounds those who live in the small world of politics and ideology.

For the Church, saints are people who are holy and give us a glimpse of God. That is why Joan of Arc was canonized, not for her politics, which apparently were monarchist. Like Joan, Dorothy looked heavenward, lived heavenward, loved heavenward.

In her journal she quoted Emmanuel Cardinal Suhard of Paris: "To be a witness does not consist in engaging in propaganda or even in stirring people up, but in being a living mystery: it means to live in such a way that one's life would not make sense if God did not exist." Dorothy Day's life was a mystery to many, but it also made utter sense.

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Mr. Emerson's Tombstone

Wilfred M. McClay

Few small American towns exude a more winning charm than Concord, Massachusetts. Much of its charm flows from the respectful but unpretentious way it has preserved its past—an uncommon achievement in today's America. On the northern edge of town stands an evocative reminder of revolutionary Concord: a faithful reconstruction of the "rude bridge" where, in April of 1775, a rag-tag band of American citizen-soldiers repulsed the British effort to seize their supply depot, and fired "the shot heard 'round the world." And a visitor strolling the town's peaceful streets has little difficulty conjuring the Concord of antebellum times, when that tiny village generated some of the most interesting literary activity in the nation's history. In those days, Concord claimed such distinguished residents as Ralph Waldo Emerson (who wrote the "Concord Hymn" quoted above), Henry David Thoreau, Bronson and Louisa May Alcott, and sometime resident Nathaniel Hawthorne, whose brooding Old Manse, Emerson's boyhood home, still stands silent watch over the hallowed eighteenth-century battlefield.

As it housed them in life, so Concord also provides their final resting place. All lie within conversational range of one another on Authors Ridge in Sleepy Hollow Cemetery, a rambling old burial ground that winds through picturesque hills and woods just a few hundred feet from the town center. As might be expected, Authors Ridge draws a steady stream of pilgrims seeking to connect with the lives of these eminent writers. But there is also something to be learned from the manner of their burial. For one thing, all are buried with their families, on ancestral family plots. Nothing remarkable about that, you will say. And yet it still comes as a bit of a surprise to be reminded that even writers who exalted the radical freedom of the individual, as Emerson did, were, in the end—before and after all else—other people's sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, husbands, and wives. Which is to say that their self-made identities were deeply rooted in conditions and relationships they did not make and could not change. Sleepy Hollow is rich with such insights for students of American life.

A cemetery is always a good place for sober reflection. Infirmity and death are the great levelers, the surest reminders of our dependency, the most painful thorns in the flesh of human pride. As we cannot escape our bodies, so we cannot escape our origins. In death, some part of the truth about us generally comes out. For example, it is only after the hero's death in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* that we find the missing piece in the puzzle of who Jay Gatsby really is, by meeting his grotesque father. At Sleepy Hollow one gleans similar insights. Take the case of Thoreau. In his life, and in his writings, there was no more fiercely independent soul. But the visitor to Sleepy Hollow has to look hard even to find his name, in the middle of a list of Thoreaus engraved on the collective family tombstone, or on his tiny individual stone. The manner of Thoreau's burial reminds us that his independence was entwined with forms of dependency, something that his writings implicitly denied.

Similarly with Emerson's grave, though it seems different at first glance. Being a man of comfortable means, Emerson could afford a large freestanding marker. But rather than using a conventional tombstone, he marked the spot with a giant boulder, identified as his grave by a small bronze plaque affixed to the rock. Needless to say, it is a surprising sight—and not an entirely harmonious one. Amid the tidy lots and meticulously carved Yankee tombstones, Emer-

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son's boulder looks a little out of place, like a grizzly bear at a Junior League luncheon. The stone itself is rough and ragged, as if it had been hauled up from deep in the bowels of the earth.

No doubt, these are just the impressions Emerson would have liked us to receive. His writings consistently linked the values of untrammeled individualism and unconstrained nature, and disparaged the conformism and artificiality of settled village life. Hence, this craggy tombstone would stand as permanent testimony to his intimate connection with the wild energies of nature, and his infinite contempt for a life lived within the safe margins of the conventional and the decorative. One might say, ringing a change on Michelangelo, that such a tombstone sought to free the stone from the sculpture. Perhaps our age, with its self-conscious penchant for parody and self-disparagement, is less sympathetic to such a romantic and self-dramatizing gesture (though I would be more inclined to blame postmodernism's self-protective unwillingness to have the courage of its neo-romantic convictions). Still, whether one finds Emerson's tombstone beautiful, arrogant, self-indulgent, ridiculous, or merely strange, one cannot deny that it makes a striking statement.

But there is one significant complication in the statement—or rather, one element in the picture that, when we notice it, subtly complicates the overall effect. Emerson's grand and scruffy self-representation is flanked by two much smaller tombstones marking the graves of his wife Lidian and daughter Ellen. The two stones are identical in size, symmetrically placed, absolutely conventional in their shapes and engravings. They stand beside and support their man, like reliable and devoted aides-de-camp marching beside their wild and brilliant general. But they are an integral part of the picture. It is not a question of political correctness, but of historical correctness, to insist that these women were indispensable to Emerson's success. For without the years of domestic felicity and stability provided by Lidian and Ellen, his pathbreaking career as itinerant lecturer, essayist, and freelance intellectual would have been inconceivable.

Any good biographer would point these things out. But there is also a much larger point to be made here, one encompassing not only Emerson's family arrangements, or the more general relations between men and women in his day, but the entire tidy world of Concord and of the American Protestantism within which Emerson was nourished and against which he rebelled. No man is an island, let alone a freestanding boulder; and Emerson's brand of heroic individualism silently presupposed—indeed, it took utterly for granted—a profound measure of social order, and a wide range of social, institutional, cultural, and moral supports provided by the family and community life into which he was born. In short, the two smaller tombstones that flank Mr. Emerson's tombstone do more than commemorate his domestic life. They also remind us of all the social resources Emerson was able to rely upon in exploring the limits of a certain style of radical selfhood. An awareness of them should alert us to the fact that such radical selves are not nearly so radical and unencumbered as they seem. One might even posit that it takes a village to raise them.

Perhaps we appreciate the solidity of those supports in Emerson's day even more than he did, precisely because of the tenuous status they enjoy in our own. Individualism looks very different played out in the mean streets, broken homes, and moral dissensus of today's urban America than it did in the gentle walkways of Victorian Concord. It is the burden of what follows to explore some of the reasons why that is so. But to do so, one must address some important questions along the way. How did the Emersonian ideal of the autonomous self arise, and then become so prevalent in American society? Was it implicit in the nation's very beginnings? Or did it arise out of some detour from those beginnings? If the latter, then when and where did the detour occur? If the former, then what are the implications for those of us who see that the ideal has now become pernicious and destructive?

To begin answering these questions, we must address ourselves to a still-prevalent misunderstanding of American history, one that has grossly overemphasized the nation's "liberal" political tradition, with its emphasis upon individual liberty and individual rights, to the exclusion of other elements in the nation's initial cultural makeup, particularly its religious traditions. The hold of that view has already been fading. But it was not so very long ago that most serious students of American politics and society were confident that the United States had been born "liberal" and "modern," and that little more need be said of the matter. And why not? Everyone knew that the "first new nation" was erected on a solid foundation of anti-aristocratic, anti-monarchical, anti-colonial, and anti-papist sentiments. Everyone knew that the political works of John Locke were widely read in the colonies, and that the natural rights language of the Declaration of Independence unmistakably echoed Lockean phraseology.

The most eminent authorities, from Alexis de Tocqueville to Frederick Jackson Turner to Louis Hartz, seemed agreed that the conditions of American life prevented feudal or premodern institutions from succeeding here. Even a conservative like John Adams had lavished his prodigious energies upon a fiercely polemical book celebrating America's freedom from "canon" (ecclesiastical) and "feudal" (aristocratic) law. It seemed plausible to argue, as Hegel, Goethe, and many others did, that America had come into the world without historical baggage—a living fragment of pure modernity which, having

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been detached from its compromising antecedents, now could manifest in pure, uncompromised form a regime, founded upon universalized individual rights, that Europe could manifest only partially and fractiously.

But this "liberal" view of American history that "everyone" imbibed was clearly inadequate, as a whole generation of scholars in American history has repeatedly demonstrated. It ignores the distinct and powerful elements of civic humanist or "republican" thinking in colonial and revolutionary America, elements that stressed the individual's necessary involvement in, and dedication to, the polity. It downplays the wide influence of Scottish moral philosophy, with its emphasis upon the inherent sociality of human nature, and of faculty psychology, which stressed the need to subject human passions to rational and social control. It gives short shrift to the elements of English institutional and legal tradition that profoundly shaped North American colonial life. But most of all, it downplays the immense and pervasive influence of Protestant Christianity, especially as embodied in Calvinistic covenant theology and congregational church polity. Of course, these diverse influences manifested themselves differently in different regions of North America, making large-scale generalizations difficult. But the point is this: the "liberal" elements in early American political thought must always be understood as being propounded in tension with other, far more restrictive—and more communitarian—views of human nature and human society. Protestant Christianity must be regarded as the most important of these forces. To the extent that Protestantism underwrote an emphasis upon individuality, it was in the form of a *constrained* individuality.

It takes a rather willful eye to miss the moral and communitarian effects of the Protestant tradition upon early America. True, if looked at exclusively from the standpoint of its revolt against the authority of Rome, or its emphasis upon the priesthood of all believers, Protestantism could be seen as an individualistic, even antinomian, deviation from Christian orthodoxy—one that, moreover, carried the seeds of political liberalism in its theological rucksack, awaiting the day when those principles could be planted in secular soil. But this version of the story does not do full justice to historical reality. In looking at concrete instances one nearly always discovers that a fruitful tension exists between the individual and the communal, the liberating and the constraining, in American Protestantism.

One example. Few documents of early American life are better known, or more familiar to scholars, than John Winthrop's 1630 speech "A Model of Christian Charity," delivered aboard the *Arbella* as she crossed the Atlantic, bound for the New World. Although Winthrop described to his fellow Puritan settlers a covenantal community formed by the mutual consent of its individual members, his conception could hardly have been less egalitarian or liberal. He began by emphasizing that social hierarchy and inequality are divinely ordained—and concluded with a vision of the Massachusetts Bay Colony as a community "knit together in [its] work as one man," committed to "make others' conditions our own, rejoice together, mourn together, labor and suffer together, always having before our eyes our commission and community in the work, our community as members of the same body." Notice, too, that Winthrop understood the strength of the community to flow from its faithful execution of its commission and its work—that is, the religious mission of the colony. Its communitarianism did not arise out of a mere dedication to community for community's sake. The body in question was understood to be that of Christ.

The existence of such strong communitarian sentiments in colonial New England has to be placed alongside the fact that, from its earliest days, Protestant theology laid extraordinary stress upon the dignity, worth, and responsibility of the individual person. Just as the decision to constitute a body politic or form a congregation was meaningless unless built upon the voluntary consent of free individuals, so the decision to submit to God in Christ meant nothing unless it proceeded out of an individual's utterly uncoerced movement of conscience. But this emphasis upon individual liberty did not mean that Protestants understood the individual as a radically free actor. Instead, it always understood individual liberty as operating under the direction of highly prescriptive and binding moral constraints. Freedom was inconceivable apart from such limits.

Protestants affirmed the primacy of the individual conscience in moral deliberation—but with the understanding that the individual conscience was unconditionally subject to God's will, a will that could, moreover, be known definitively by every individual through an unmediated encounter with Holy Scripture. It emphasized the individual's need for conversion, for an active and vibrant faith in the person of Christ, and for devotion to a life of holiness—while recognizing that these were the fruits not of one's autonomous efforts, but of God's free gift of saving grace. Reformed theology highlighted the role of grace by reemphasizing the doctrine of original sin, and therefore insisting upon the need for powerful external restraints and checks, particularly those founded in the scriptural texts, upon the naturally self-interested passions and uncontrolled behavior of a fallen and depraved humanity.

To say that a Reformed Protestant ethos permeated the political culture of eighteenth-century America is not to deny that there were any purely "liberal" notions of political freedom in competition with it. Indeed, by the time of the American Revolution, we

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do see the growing use of a secular language of strictly natural rights, expressed in some of the most famous texts of the period (e.g., Thomas Paine's *Common Sense* and Jefferson's Declaration of Independence). But the emergence of this language does not mean that it displaced all other ways of speaking and thinking about public life. Republicanism, Scottish common-sense philosophy and faculty psychology, English common law and history, Reformed Protestant moral theology and social corporatism—all of these formative strains continued to play a strong and visible role in the debates over the country's political future.

That said, however, one can observe that the Constitution of 1787 presumed, as George Washington, John Adams, and many others were wont to say, a moral and religious people—but did not do very much directly to perpetuate such a people. It relied on other agencies of society to produce citizens capable of exercising political liberty in a morally responsible manner. While the Framers hoped to make ambition counteract ambition, they understood that thwarting vice is not the same thing as cultivating virtue.

Hence the importance of the First Amendment's guarantees of religious liberty. As Mary Ann Glendon has pointed out, the Amendment's "establishment" and "free exercise" clauses, far from being at odds with one another, speak with a single voice in support of the conscience-liberty that the Framers deemed indispensable to any religious practices that would shape and refine public morality. Such a view clearly represented an elaboration of the Protestant idea of "constrained individuality." It is worth noting, too, that one sees this view displayed with equal vividness in the fears expressed by the Constitution's opponents, who argued that the document was "godless" and took no direct responsibility for the cultivation of a pious and virtuous citizenry.

Either way, though, the Protestant view of the freely choosing individual who is constrained (and thereby made genuinely free) by education and formative training, and especially by the inculcation of transcendent biblical principles, remained a component of the new constitutional order, even if that view had become more of a background assumption than a stated conviction. Even the irreligious were likely to say some of the same things. Thomas Jefferson consistently stressed the critical importance of education as a way of impressing people with their "duties" as well as their "rights." Writing in 1818 to the commissioners of the University of Virginia, he argued that education would be of the highest importance in generating "habits of application, of order, and the love of virtue"; only education "controls, by force of habit, any innate obliquities in our moral organization." So whether one was speaking of original sin or "innate obliquities," the practical result was the same: the newly liberated individual, whose freedom from "monkish" superstition Jefferson loved to celebrate, continued to require restraint and discipline if liberal and republican institutions were to survive and flourish. And it was not enough for those constraints to be applied externally, like so many fences and leashes. They needed to be completely internalized as well. The responsible democratic self would have to be (in David Riesman's famous term) inner-directed, or self-constrained.

Once the new nation was firmly established in its new institutions, the problem of finding effective means of restraint soon became much more challenging. Beginning in the years after the War of 1812, the nation experienced an explosion of economic energy and growth, the fruits of industrial and market revolutions, opening up fresh opportunities for social advancement and individual transformation. The combination of rising general prosperity, expanding economic opportunity, rapid technological change, the increasing democratization of politics, and the ubiquity of popular evangelical Protestantism all tended to accentuate awareness of the "self" as an independent agent—if for no other reason than the weakening hold of other sources of identity. As Alexis de Tocqueville contended, a regime and society dedicated to social equality and social mobility inevitably tended to isolate the individual; and much of Tocqueville's attention was devoted to the dangers unleashed by this individualism.

Reformers such as the educational pioneer Horace Mann continued to understand the problem as one of implanting the tools of self-regulation, educating naturally anarchic individuals for self-control and self-constraint. But in other cases one sees a subtle change in emphasis, from the inculcation of constraining values to a more wholesale reformation of "the self." The change correlated with a distinct theological shift, in which the hard-edged Calvinism of colonial days began to be supplanted by a more optimistic and ambition-friendly Arminianism, which had traded in the stubbornly limited horizons of original sin for the more enticing possibility of moral perfection. For example, the Unitarian clergyman William Ellery Channing, whose 1838 lecture "Self-Culture" became a classic brief for the endless human capacity for self-improvement, argued that God had endowed the human race with the extraordinary power "of acting on, determining, and forming ourselves." And Horace Bushnell, whose enormously influential child-rearing manual *Christian Nurture* (first published in 1847) made him the Dr. Spock of his era, saw the role of education less as the transmission of ideas and moral principles than of comprehensive self-making. In his ideal world, a child would be spared the friction and uncertainty of moral struggle by being provided an entire cultural and emotional set, imparted at such an early age as to be preconscious in nature. "The child," he averred,

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"is to grow up a Christian, and never know himself as being otherwise."

No need, then, for the herky-jerky emotionalism of evangelicalism, with its roller-coaster ride of sin and conversion, conviction and repentance, fall and redemption. Proper nurture could bypass the vagaries of nature and chance. No need anymore, either, for the doctrinal rigor and austere intellectualism of Jonathan Edwards' Connecticut Valley Calvinism. Affects, not ideas, had consequences. Nurture was more important than instruction, feeling than thought, poetry than theology, character than intellect. Jefferson's original ideal had been transformed by Bushnell into a largely psychological and sentimental education, a view of character formation that substituted properly formed affects and habits not only for external constraints, but for internal beliefs. Like Channing, he saw the goal of education as the construction of the optimal self—the kind of self that would have the power to continue endlessly in the task of its own self-making.

It is not hard to see that the very concept of "self-culture," by being transformed into the cultivation of affect (or the "moral consecration of sentiment," in Charles Taylor's words), and at the same time being detached from a theology of inherent human limitation, ran the risk of making the activity of self-construction and self-refinement into an end in itself. That is precisely what happened in the thought of Emerson, whose Transcendentalism elevated the promptings of his inner nature to a status equal to that of divine revelation in nature, and thereby broke decisively from the older Protestant pattern of constrained individuality. Without a credible intellectual and theological basis for guiding and restraining it, the consecration of sentiment could easily lose its communitarian coziness, and become simply the worship of the imperial self and its vernal-wood impulses.

Boundlessness, not constraint, was the Emersonian watchword; indeed, he exclaimed, "the only sin is limitation." Like Channing, Emerson believed that human potential was endless: "Before the immense possibilities of man," he cried, "all mere experience, all past biography, however spotless and sainted, shrinks away." Such immensity meant one should disdain the staleness of every thought or action that was inherited or derivative: custom, history, tradition, even society itself. The pieties of the past belong to the past; the free mind need not be detained by them, for "nothing is at last sacred but the integrity of your own mind." The older view of the free self as a tense equilibrium of countervailing forces had been replaced by the romantic and holistic injunction to "trust thyself"—the very advice a Jonathan Edwards would have strenuously cautioned us against. That our present-day sages would be more likely to warn us against Edwards than against Emerson speaks volumes about the place where we have now arrived.

There was a procession, then, from self-control to self-culture to self-worship. "All religion, all solid things, arts, governments," intoned Emerson's great admirer, the poet Walt Whitman, "[fall] into niches and corners before the procession of souls along the grand roads of the universe." One might say that we have been following those grand roads ever since, from Bunyan to Kerouac. Although we are not yet at the end of them, we are surely far enough along to see where they have been taking us, and the destination looks none too grand. We now live in an environment in which the Protestant idea has been nearly universalized, but at the expense of being truncated and diminished, à la Whitman, into little more than an unrestricted right of individual judgment, unbounded by any limiting principle or any source of authoritative moral rules or prescriptions. This sobering consideration brings us back to some of the questions raised earlier. Is it possible that the Protestant principle itself was flawed from the beginning, and bound to lead us into something like the moral chaos of our own day, with its worship of the sovereign self and its sovereign appetites? Is there a straight line leading from "the shot heard 'round the world" to endemic divorce, gangsta rap, and the North American Man-Boy Love Association?

In an 1892 speech called "The Solitude of Self," Elizabeth Cady Stanton summarized "our Protestant idea" as "the right of individual conscience and judgment." But that is only half the story, the sort of half-truth that is worse than a falsehood. The Protestant idea, to repeat, was always one of *constrained* individuality, which entailed a freely accepted obedience to a thoroughly internalized authority, whose prescriptions were expressed in an accessible and authoritative text. American Protestantism liberated the individual believer from the peremptory authority of the church and *aristoi*—Adams' canon and feudal law—but not without putting in their place other sources of authority. This move, of course, hinged a great deal upon the trustworthiness of the Bible, which meant that if the assaults on scriptural authority by Darwinian science, "higher" criticism, and all the rest of modernity's acids were successful, there would be little left behind in mainline Protestantism other than the affirmation and cultivation of the "separate self."

One could argue that Protestantism is now paying the price for its textualist ways, its low ecclesiology, and its neglect of the communal and countercultural dimension of the Christian life. On the other hand, one does not need to be a fundamentalist to respond that, whatever the sources of mainline Protestantism's current woes, an excessive attention to the Bible is not one of them. But the matter is too consequential for us to be content with scoring debating points. The fact remains that our civilization's most effective pattern for ordered liberty, whether in matters religious or matters civil and constitutional, rests

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upon the constraining force of foundational texts, such as the Bible and the Constitution. To the extent that such foundational texts become "problematized" into impotence—to the extent that they are deemed to have no clear and fixed meaning available to all, and are thereby removed from the common person's reach—to that extent will the church and the nation have yielded to new forms of canon and feudal law, administered by the currently ordained "communities of interpretation," which will feel at liberty to make of a text what they wish.

This is of course precisely what is at stake when judges and constitutional lawyers speak of a "living Constitution" or "the life of the law" as a way of disregarding the clear meaning of a legal text. The crisis of modern literary criticism and the crisis of modern jurisprudence thus have some considerable connection with one another. Democratic liberty depends upon our ability to invest a text with ordering authority, to allow the text to stand as a rock of stability and secure point of reference to which one can repair amid the confusing and disorienting currents of life. But when such texts become rendered endlessly fluid and problematic, they eventually become the property of a hermeneutical class, which then constitutes itself, rather than the text, as the real ordering authority—a government, so to speak, of men and not laws. To point this out is invariably dismissed as philosophically naive, and there is some validity to the criticism. But surely it is infinitely more naive to think that a liberal and democratic order can continue to exist as such when its laws become unintelligible to its citizens—and the moral or religious principles upon which their constraining function depends are left without the support of generally accessible and authoritative texts. Those who are disdainful of such textual clarity ought at least to have the consistency of being equally disdainful of constitutional democracy, and of the rule of law itself.

This question of the fixity, transparency, and transcendent meaning of texts also points toward some of the objections to be made against the current communitarian movement, which arose as an attempt to answer the Emersonian hypertrophy of the self. The Protestant formula of constrained individuality is something very different from the idea of vesting authority in the community qua community. Both oppose the excesses of Emersonian individualism, but they do so in entirely different ways. Recall, in this connection, Winthrop's emphasis upon the "commission" with which he and his followers were charged. They were asked to surrender their individual ambitions to the community, and bear one another's burdens gladly. But they did this for Christ's sake, not for the community's sake. As one can clearly see from their copious diaries, they sought, and found, the meaning of their own lives by passing them through an immense filter of biblical stories, parables, prayers, and admonitions. It is a very different matter to attempt to constitute community without reliance upon the impersonal authority of a foundational text; and to imagine that one could produce the same effects without the same causes is folly. By failing to recognize this, many communitarians have merely inverted Emerson's error, rather than correcting it.

One of the most notable weaknesses of the communitarians has been their skittishness about specifying behaviors that are right or wrong, and suggesting sanctions against the latter. Communitarians are in love with the idea of limits, but cannot agree on any limits to observe; they are in love with the idea of community, but find all real existing communities to be fatally flawed (too narrow, too insular, too homogeneous, too intolerant, etc.). Even at its best, communitarianism gives short shrift to the virtues of individualism—particularly of what might be called "individualism rightly understood." As Reinhold Niebuhr argued, there is a profound moral need for the individual to be able, from time to time, to stand aloof from all social groupings, since all groups are dangerously corruptible, and all are subject to the interest-driven fallenness that governs human associations here below. But he never imagined that this individualism could or should exist without a network of constraints and supports.

So the question remains: Is there a way to restore something resembling the older Protestant settlement of constrained individuality, which navigates between the hazards of radical individualism and suffocating communitarianism? One would like to hope so, and the fate of much of the social policy of the years to come, particularly policy directed at the strengthening of families, will hinge upon that very task. It will be hard to get very far with that question without also coming to terms with some of the specific conflicts over the sources of moral authority that have long separated Catholics and Protestants, particularly Reformed Protestants.

But one way to begin thinking about the matter is suggested by the scene in Sleepy Hollow with which we began. The flanking stones of Emerson's wife and daughter remind us that, for all the ways that we worry ourselves about individualism, it is in some ultimate sense an illusion, for there is really no such thing as an unencumbered self. There never has been, and never will be. Indeed, it is hard to imagine what such a creature would look like. The belief that the individual can live, as Emerson said, "without let or hindrance" means simply that one has forgotten about the sources of one's being, not that those sources have ceased to exist. In the fullness of time, a reminder of those sources comes to us all.

But another reflection, more charitable and perhaps more valuable, also arises out of the contemplation of Emerson's tombstone. It is the singular glory of the civilization we call "Western" that it places so high a value on the soul and conscience of the indi-

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vidual person. That this valuation has been allowed to grow beyond all bounds, like a heavenward-aimed Tower of Babel, should not finger it as flawed from the start, unless one is prepared to say that all the growth and constructive residue of history is vanity, and nothing more. (Partisans of *that* view may prefer to spend their Sleepy Hollow time at Mr. Hawthorne's tombstone.) Emerson's belief in the lavish creativity of the individual human spirit, and "the unsearched might of man," was, like most heresies, an intensification of something true, if not quite true enough. Even the most grand and gloomy pessimists of our age are energized by a sense of Emersonian ambition when they sit down to tap out their dreary tomes (and fantasize about their sales figures). The expansive sense of individual possibility remains a part of who and what we are as a people, even in the most unexpected ways. To wish to extinguish that would be like wishing to extinguish life itself.

There are, however, far better ways to think about individual possibility. Addicted as we now are to the shallow and wasteful dynamic of unending generational rebellion—a dynamic that Emerson himself celebrated and helped to create—we often find it difficult to understand that one can both revere and criticize the actors of the past. But such a complex disposition is one of the chief achievements of a mature adulthood. It is capable of a love that pays homage to one's antecedents without worshiping them—and knows the steep price of repudiating one's ancestors, precisely because they are one's own. Emerson spoke for a noble spark in the human spirit, though one that has ignited a dangerous conflagration by its own excesses. It is important for us to acknowledge that spark, and that error. For Emerson remains a part of our collective past that we should never repudiate entirely. He was a rebellious son, but also a cultural father. And it is generally a good thing to pay one's respects to fallible fathers—even disturbers of the peace who fancied themselves boulders among stones, or lions among sheep. It is a good thing, because even the rowdiest of sons will come to lie down in the same earth as their fathers, and mothers, and wives. Thus is every individuality constrained, eventually. FT

Come

Psalm 80

Listen, reader of the dreams
Interpreted by Joseph, who led
Israel into Egypt, brought them
Up again: return us to ourselves.

However long it takes to mill,
To knead the sorry flour, our bread
Crumbles and the neighbors jeer.

Return us to ourselves. Why plant
These terraced hills with vineyards,
Cork trees, almonds, olives, cedars,
Willows trailing in the river?

Passing strangers trample down
Thorn hedges, pluck the orchards
Bare. Deer and boar root out

The broken fruit. Can you look down,
And not return us to ourselves,
The chosen cutting scorched, uprooted?
O unpronounceable that made us,

Make us strong again. We know
There is no going back.
Return us to ourselves.

Laurance Wieder

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The Cuban Revolutions

Richard John Neuhaus

Cuba is notably short on snow, and Fidel Castro is hardly a ruler in the mold of the emperor Henry IV, although there are striking similarities between the reforming Popes Gregory VII and John Paul II. Nine hundred and twenty-one years later, there was more than a touch of Canossa about the encounter of those five days beginning with the Pope's arrival at Havana airport on January 21, 1998. Unlike Gregory, John Paul was not making the point that he had the authority and power to depose tyrants. In the encyclical *Redemptoris Missio,* the present Pope wrote, "The Church imposes nothing; she only proposes." And unlike Henry, Castro was surely not contending for his rights as a Christian prince. Between John Paul and Castro there was, or so it seems, a contention over diametrically opposed belief systems. (Assuming that we know what Fidel really believes, which is by no means certain.) What happened that week demonstrates that the Church's proposal of the gospel of Christ has a power to depose greater than the anathemas of centuries past.

From the Wednesday opening act at José Martí airport, Castro combined exceeding deference, almost docility, toward the Pope with defiantly strident attacks on the U.S.—*El coloso del Norte*—the colossus of the North that is presumably responsible for all of Cuba's woes. His welcoming speech immediately launched into a telling of the history of Cuba as one long sad tale of abuse by others. First there were the Spaniards and what they did to the indigenous people: "Most of the men were annihilated by the exploitation and the enslaved work they could not resist and the women turned into pleasure objects or domestic slaves." Although this comes from a very Spanish Castro, here and elsewhere he casts himself unqualifiedly as the victim. As he will again at the farewell ceremonies the next Sunday, he compares the sufferings of Cuba to the Holocaust against the Jews. Moreover, "genocide" is now being attempted by the U.S., a nation "much more powerful than the old Rome that for centuries had the beasts devour those who refused to abdicate their faith." Like those early Christians, he declares, "we choose a thousand times death rather than abdicate our convictions. The revolution, like the Church, has many martyrs."

Among the graffiti painted and sprayed all over Havana is "Socialism or death." Castro has given Cuba both. The revolution indeed has many martyrs, but not exactly in the sense that he suggested. The conservative estimate of the number summarily executed by the regime is five thousand. Uncounted thousands more have died in prison or drowned at sea trying to escape Castro's liberation, not to mention more than a million, about one tenth of the population, living in exile. In his opening speech, Castro mentions the alleged sins of the Church, noting that the Jesuit school he attended as a boy discriminated against blacks. This despite the fact that faces of a darker hue are almost entirely absent from the upper echelons of his regime. He congratulates the Pope for addressing some of the Church's failures, but self-examination is clearly not contagious. With respect to, for instance, religious freedom since 1959, Castro flatly declares, "If there have ever been difficulties, the revolution is not to blame."

In sharpest contrast to Castro's harsh and self-serving speech, the Pope says in response that he has come "as a pilgrim of love, of truth, and of hope." He pointedly notes that he came in response to a long-standing invitation from the Cuban bishops, an implied reminder that he would have come earlier had it not been for Castro's opposition. "In fulfilling my ministry, I have not ceased to proclaim the truth concerning Jesus Christ, the one who has revealed the truth about man, his mission in the world, the greatness of his destiny, and his inviolable dignity." Every aspect of this truth about man—spiritual,

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social, political—the Pope would develop in the days ahead. In this opening moment he strikes a keynote theme of his pontificate, "Be not afraid!" That was the exhortation of his first sermon as Pope in October 1978, and he would sound it again throughout this visit. At the airport he declares, "Be not afraid to open your hearts to Christ. Allow him to come into your lives, into your families, into your society."

John Paul concluded his opening remarks with the prayer "that this land may offer to everyone a climate of freedom, mutual trust, social justice, and lasting peace." "May Cuba with all its magnificent potential open itself to the world and may the world open itself to Cuba, so that this people, which is working to make progress and which longs for concord and peace, may look to the future with hope." As he will make increasingly explicit in the coming days, the Cuba envisioned by the Pope is contingent upon conversion to the truth revealed in Jesus Christ and conversion from the falsehoods of Marxist ideology.

The question inevitably and persistently asked is what real difference the Pope's visit will make. The chief and, I believe, irreversible difference was made already at the opening ceremonies at José Martí airport. For the first time in nearly forty years this was a public event in which Fidel Castro and the party were not center stage. With other visiting dignitaries, Fidel would ride from the airport in triumph through the streets of Havana. There was just a moment when it seemed that Castro was going to get into the popemobile with John Paul, and then he caught himself and stepped back, realizing that his small part in this drama was over. During the week he would appear briefly again, welcoming the Pope for a private conversation, sitting in the front row at the university as the Pope lectured Cuban intellectuals on the meaning of democracy, then in the congregation at the last Mass, and finally back at the airport for the farewell.

From the opening ceremony on, it was unmistakable that this was the Pope's show. He rode from the airport through the wildly cheering Havana throngs as the guest not of the state but of the Church in Cuba. Fidel was nowhere in sight. In the following days, the people of Cuba would rally to a banner other than the revolution—the cross of Christ and the symbolic head of his Church on earth. Again and again, the Christian revolution was proposed, sometimes implicitly and sometimes explicitly, in contrast to, and therefore against, the revolution of Fidel. That the Cuban people were so powerfully drawn to this new revolution, and that it has a continuing institutional base in the Catholic Church, means that never again can Fidel believably assert that he and the party have an exclusive claim on representing the people. Most of the people have known for years that that claim is empty, but this week they dared to say it out loud, to say it to one another, to shout it in public, and now the whole world knows.

Mussolini first articulated the dogma of totalitarian government: "Everything within the state, nothing against the state, nothing outside the state." *L'état c'est moi,* declared Louis XIV, but he did not presume to think that the state was everything. It is different with totalitarians. A graffito on a tumbled-down mansion in the suburbs of Havana announces, "Fidel is the revolution. The revolution is Cuba." Now Fidel is *one* revolution in Cuba. With the papal visit of January, Cuba took the decisive step toward pluralism, a step that portends, sooner or later, the end of Fidel's revolution. Repeatedly the Pope proposed Christianity as the basis of Cuban unity, thereby implicitly casting the party and its state in the role of a faction. Some say Castro cannot put the genie back into the bottle; others say he could try, once he realizes what has happened, to put it back by imposing a reign of terror. Yet others say that he has known for some time that his revolution has dismally failed and that he welcomes the relief from the burden of trying to sustain an unsustainable lie. So long, that is, as he is still in charge of whatever succeeds the lie.

At the airport farewell on Sunday, Castro almost chortled that what he called the "apocalyptic" predictions of those who thought the papal visit would topple his government had been disproved. It is true that there were such predictions. One person in our company who had spent years in Eastern Europe speculated earlier in the week that the climactic Sunday Mass might be a replay of the 1989 crowd in Romania that within hours, even minutes, turned against the Ceausescu regime that was previously thought to be in unchallengeable control. The apocalyptic mood of the week was intensified by the breaking news from Washington suggesting that President Clinton was on the edge of resigning over the latest scandal of sex and lies. It would go down in history, some said, as the week of the two resignations, Fidel's and Clinton's. Throughout those days our attention alternated between the mighty rushing wind of the Spirit in Cuba and the all-sleaze-all-the-time presidential affairs being reported on CNN back at the hotel.

The Pope stayed each night in Havana, flying forth and back for the three Masses that preceded the Sunday Mass—one in Santa Clara, one in Camaguey, and one in Santiago de Cuba. The size of the crowds and the intensity of the response built with each succeeding event. Castro had encouraged the people to attend the Masses, and there were obviously many there who had no idea what was going on. I am told it was the first time on such a papal visit that there was a priest-commentator at the Masses explaining the basics of the liturgical action. Each homily was carefully crafted to build on what went before. In the homily at Santa Clara, John Paul declared, "Be not afraid! Open your families and

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schools to the values of the gospel of Jesus Christ." Directly challenging the regime's monopoly on education and the practice of separating adolescent children from their families, he said that while the state has a legitimate interest in the education of future citizens, it does not have "the right to take the place of parents." Parents, he said, "should be able to choose for their children the pedagogical method, the ethical and civic content, and the religious inspiration that will enable them to receive an integral education." Family was the theme at this first Mass and, in addition to education, John Paul addressed contraception, abortion, and divorce, telling the crowd of eighty to a hundred thousand that each of these evils militated against the dignity that is theirs as children of God.

Although it resisted until the last minute, the government finally allowed all the Masses to be televised throughout the island. While there is much that can be better seen and heard on television, there is no substitute for being there, and so very early Friday morning we are off in a Soviet-built executive jet for a two-hour flight to Camagüey in the middle of the island. Arriving with a passel of cardinals and bishops, we find a youthful crowd of perhaps two hundred thousand who have already been waiting for two or three hours in a very hot sun. Santiago on Saturday would be even hotter, and the crowds even larger. The Pope forces himself through a grueling sixteen-hour schedule each day and arrives looking as though he might not make it to the end of the Mass. As has happened so often in recent years, however, the nearly seventy-eight-year-old pontiff draws energy from the message he is declaring and from the crowd, which today is very lively indeed.

Young people jump up and down without interruption, waving their little sticks with the Cuban and Vatican flags, as the Pope tells them: "Do not look outside for what is to be found inside. Do not leave for tomorrow the building of a new society in which the noblest dreams are not frustrated and in which you can be the principal agents of your own history." Repeatedly, he posits against collectivist solutions the crucial importance of the individual and of personal responsibility. The future of Cuba is not "to be sought only in structures, resources, and institutions, in the political system, or the effects of economic embargoes, which are always deplorable because they hurt the most needy." On Sunday the Pope will return to the question of the U.S. embargo, which Castro blames for the miseries of Cuba. Here in Camagüey John Paul says, "These are all part of the answer, but they do not touch the heart of the problem." The heart of the problem is respect for human rights and the exercise of rights in accordance with moral truth.

Camagüey is said to be the most Catholic area of Cuba, which does not mean it is very Catholic. Before the revolution, more than 70 percent of the population of Cuba was baptized. Today that is a little over 40 percent, which is remarkable enough when one considers that until 1992 Cuba was an officially atheistic state in which young people were subjected to antireligious indoctrination and believers were severely penalized by being systematically denied opportunities of work and education. In Camagüey I talk with the pastor of a parish who has been a priest in the district for thirty-six years. The population of his parish is over sixty thousand, he says, with thirty-seven thousand Catholics. He is the only priest in the parish and over the years he has had but one Mass on Sunday—with an average attendance of a little under three hundred. That is one-half of 1 percent of the Catholic population. But recently that has been changing.

From where we stand with hundreds of clergy on the huge Caribbean pink platform, one cannot see the end of the vast cheering crowd. The pastor is exultant and keeps repeating the word "miracle." "Yes, it is a miracle," other priests join in. None of the young people believe in the revolution, they say. "It is all just talk, talk, talk, anger and excuses, while all around them is misery and no future." "We have been waiting for this for years. Now there is no going back. This time the Church must do it right." The last comment reflects a widespread awareness that Cuba before 1959 was not as Catholic as it appeared, that the common people had not been thoroughly evangelized. Before the revolution there were almost eight hundred priests, now there are fewer than three hundred. Many fled, many were expelled, but it was agreed that even were there five thousand priests tomorrow it would make little difference unless the Church became, as it never really was, "a people's Church."

"A people's Church." I note this odd mixture of revolutionary and churchly jargon. "We needed the revolution in order to become the Church," volunteers an enthusiastic young priest. This meets with a scowl from our pastor. "What are you saying? Nobody needed this revolution. It will take generations to remedy the damage it has done." Everywhere there is this sense of a new beginning, usually marked by a grim recognition of how hard it will be. Nowhere was this beginning more boldly asserted than the next day in Santiago, the cradle of Fidel's revolution in the Oriente region. Surrounded by the Sierra Maestra mountains where the revolution began, before an even larger and more exuberant crowd, Archbishop Pedro Meurice Estiu did the introductions. This is usually no more than a formality, but he used the occasion to deliver the most frontal challenge of the visit thus far.

Raul Castro, Fidel's brother and second in command, was seated in the front row as Archbishop Meurice spoke of "Cubans who have confused the fatherland with a single party, the nation with the historical process we have lived through during the last few decades, and culture with an ideology." Cuba has been corrupted by a "false messianism," he assert-

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ed. Directly contradicting Fidel's disclaimer at the airport, he attributed Cuba's and the Church's ills to "an ideological confrontation with Marxism-Leninism induced by the state." Such words had not been said in public for almost forty years. The Pope's response began by thanking the Archbishop for his welcome, and that met with thunderous applause. He then thanked the state authorities for their presence, and that met with an even more thunderous silence. The message of that moment, I expect, was indelibly imprinted on the minds of all who were there and of the millions watching on television. One revolution is the past. Another is now underway.

Santiago was skillfully choreographed to reappropriate the history and identity of Cuba for Christianity. The statue of Cuba's patron saint, Our Lady of Charity of El Cobre, was carried to the Mass and there the Pope crowned her anew as the Queen of Cuba, to the huge crowd's incessant shouting of "Viva! Viva!" Signifying Cuba's dedication to Our Lady, all stood to sing the national anthem, and what could poor Raul do but stand with them and sing along, his stony visage making no secret of his displeasure. It is generally assumed that Raul is the real Marxist in the family, and he must have been wondering not for the first time what madness possessed his older brother to permit this visit. The Pope did not make it easier by appealing for the release of political prisoners. "There is also suffering of the soul," he said, "such as we see in those who are isolated, persecuted, imprisoned for various offenses or for reasons of conscience, for ideas which though dissenting are nonetheless peaceful. These prisoners of conscience suffer a penalty for something for which their own conscience does not condemn them. What they want is to participate actively in life with the opportunity to speak their mind with respect and tolerance." Human rights groups say there are nine hundred to two thousand political prisoners in Cuba. Angelo Cardinal Sodano gave Cuban authorities a list of several hundred political prisoners, of whom, as of this writing, about 250 have been released, some with the condition that they accept exile to Canada. The regime refused to release seventy who were on the list, declaring that "There cannot be nor will there be impunity for the enemies of the homeland nor for those intent on destroying Cuba."

Back at the Cohiba Hotel in Havana, between Masses, meetings, and excursions around the city, there is nonstop talk trying to figure out what all this means. The hotel to which our group from the Archdiocese of New York was assigned boasts five stars and is part of a chain based in Spain. In brutal contrast with the conditions endured by the Cuban people, it is obscenely sumptuous, being one of several oases of luxury built for tourists and others with dollars to spend. By far the biggest source of income for Cuba is remittances from Cubans in the U.S. who send dollars to their families back home. But for this week the government has also embraced the ways of that much-excoriated "unbridled capitalism," more than tripling prices for the thousands of pilgrims and four thousand journalists who arrived for the Pope's visit. Over dinner at the Cohiba we meet with two leaders of an independent, which is to say illegal, labor movement. It is not really a movement, just a handful of people furtively communicating with one another and trying to make contact with the outside world in the hope that there will one day be a movement.

Vicente, or so I shall call him, is a middle-aged man who has lived for years on the far side of the law and speaks with calm confidence of Catholic social teaching, and especially the 1991 encyclical *Centesimus Annus*, as the "blueprint" for a Cuba of economic and political justice after Fidelismo. He looks over the ostentatiously lavish buffet of the hotel restaurant—fifteen different meats, platters of various fish, heaps of shrimp, pastries, and desserts—and pronounces it "criminal." I am ordinarily averse to moralistic condemnations of affluence, but in this case criminal is the right word. I have been to many grindingly poor places in the world. In the 1970s I traveled most of Africa and wrote a book on life under apartheid in South Africa. Cuba is very different. Nowhere have I seen such stark class divisions, an apartheid based on nothing but party connections and what here truly does seem to be "the almighty dollar."

Mass poverty in our world is an all too familiar phenomenon. Usually it is a matter of people who have always been poor and, however gradually, are improving their lot. Here the immiserization of the masses (Marx) is an artificial achievement of the revolution. The average wage for a laborer is eight dollars per month; a doctor can make as much as twenty dollars. A quart of milk, if it can be found, costs more than a dollar, and the government-imposed ration limits milk to children under age seven. Each person is allowed one quarter litre of cooking oil per month. Butter is a thing of dreams, an electric light bulb is a luxury item, and on and on. The reality is that the revolution has forced almost everybody outside the party leadership to live outside the law simply in order to survive.

Tourists find quaint the thousands of old cars from the 1950s and even the 1930s—DeSotos and Packards, and a host of 1950s Chevrolets—kept running by desperately inventive scavenging and transplantation of parts. Whatever the depredations of the Batista years, there were lots of new cars then. The artificial imposition of poverty is most evident in the housing. Throughout the city and its outskirts, the beauty that was Havana is evident in mansions and long stretches of solid middle-class housing now in ruins. People are living in the ruins, often with several generations of a family assigned to what were formerly apartments now divided into tiny cubicles. All living

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places are, of course, assigned by the state. Along the splendid waterfront between the tourist hotels and Old Havana are miles of once magnificent architecture now collapsed or collapsing, bricked over, and in total darkness, but one notices that people are living there, too. A window that is not broken or boarded over or taped up is conspicuous. It is Beirut in its darkest days. There are twenty-story housing projects now abandoned, some apparently abandoned before they were even completed. Everywhere is the irrational wrack and ruin of the rationally controlled economy. Except for the privileged enclaves of the party controllers.

La historia me absolverá—history will absolve me—is the title of an early pamphlet by Fidel Castro. It is now obvious that he will have to look elsewhere for absolution, which may help explain why he wanted the Pope's visit. In his indictment of all that was intolerable about the times of Batista, Castro has over the years focused relentlessly on the pervasiveness of prostitution in the bad old days. On one drive by the waterfront this week I count forty-seven prostitutes brazenly hailing the passing cars. They are very young and very thin, and one suspects it is not because thinness is in fashion. There is a more or less open market of young women eager to be rescued by marriage to a tourist, or at least to be maintained as a mistress. Canadians and Europeans, who have no visa problems and find Cuba to be, as it is said, a tourist's paradise, figure prominently in this business. I am told it takes no more than a hundred dollars to secure a beautiful mistress for a week. And yes, priests, too, are routinely propositioned. The women had never seen a Roman collar before, and at least one young lady, when a priest friend explained what it means, didn't see why that should make any difference.

The mass executions and jailings of the early years are past, but it is still a police state operating by the whims of one man. There are rumors about tensions within the Communist Party, but these are discounted. "Fidel is completely in charge," says Vicente. "No Fidel, no problem." The last two years have witnessed a clamping down, as dozens of members of human rights, labor, and student groups have been arrested on charges such as "illegal association," "revealing state secrets," and "showing disrespect for the revolution." In New York, José Miguel Vivanco of Human Rights Watch/Americas says, "There is zero tolerance in Cuba for any space for independent political activity." I'm impressed by the readiness of some dissidents to make quite open contact with us here. "I don't think they'll arrest me for this," says one. "They don't worry about us talking to you. They assume you're hopeless. They only arrest us for persuading our own people." Just the same, I think I will not mention names.

Everything about Fidel's revolution seems dated, stale, stifling and as macabre as the mummified body of Lenin in Red Square. In the Museum of the Revolution, formerly the presidential palace, is the burlap bag that contained the body of Che Guevara, who was killed on a pitiably romantic revolutionary mission in Bolivia in 1967. It is displayed as a revolutionary counterpart to the Shroud of Turin. There is also the *Granma* in an outdoors glass enclosure, the boat on which Fidel arrived from Mexico to launch the revolution, along with other detritus of the sacred lore of heroic struggle. The museum has a "Cretins' Corner" with posters of Batista, Ronald Reagan, and George Bush who are defiantly thanked for, respectively, "giving us the revolution," "strengthening the revolution," and "consolidating the revolution." (One wonders why JFK of Bay of Pigs infamy is not included.) Among the ubiquitous slogans is a billboard facing the U.S. interests section of the Swiss embassy: "Mr. Imperialist, We are not afraid of you."

How to describe the catastrophe of Fidel's revolution? Forty years of a sustained spasm of juvenile rebellion. Instead of taking over "People's Park," imagine the radicals of Berkeley taking over a country for forty years, ripping off its wealth and putting nothing back, while maintaining an ideological high on the egotism of a maximum leader surrounded by sycophancy and terror. List all the goods that government is to secure—measured by each and every one, the revolution is a dismal failure. Apologists claim that, despite all, the regime has achieved remarkable successes in health and education. This is exceedingly doubtful. Hospitals in Havana are in ruins, and medical clinics are headed by semi-trained nurses who have not the most basic medicines. Education is ideological indoctrination, and what is the point of literacy if the only thing you can read is party propaganda? Unlike most juvenile rebellions, this one exacted a high price, even risking nuclear war at one point. The endgame reveals that the revolution has succeeded only in reducing a people to the misery of pauperism and the humiliation of dependency—first on the Soviet dole and now on the U.S. dollar. Castro's regime has given a new meaning to the term welfare state. The entire state, and the country with it, is on welfare. In numerous conversations not one Cuban had a good word to say about the revolution. Admittedly, I did not talk to party apparatchiks. The word repeatedly heard is *catastrofe*.

One must ask why, in such a desperate circumstance, Castro invited the Pope. What did he think he would gain from the visit? An older dissident, who has spent much of his life in Castro's jails, says Fidel is getting old. At age seventy-one, "He thinks more about dying than about living." He does look gaunt and is reported to have been seriously ill in the past year. An American student of Cuba says Fidel, unlike Raul, was only a Marxist of convenience. "He is a romantic revolutionary who wanted a cause, and it could just as well have been fascism,"

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he says. Or perhaps Fidel anticipates leading a Cuba reborn in the Christian identity so dramatically displayed at the Mass in Santiago. In Havana's Plaza of the Revolution (which John Paul pointedly referred to by its old name, the Plaza of José Martí), Fidel permitted the erection of a massive mural of the Sacred Heart emblazoned with *Jesucristo En Ti Confio*—Jesus Christ, In You I Trust.

A standard line of the U.S. media is that Castro was seeking from the Pope's visit "legitimacy" for his regime, and there is no doubt something to that. The Pope did reiterate his long-standing criticism of the U.S. embargo, referred to by the regime as the blockade (*el bloqueo*). The Pope also reiterated his familiar criticism of capitalism that is unchecked by morality, or "neoliberalism" as Latin Americans now call it. At the final Mass in Havana, one CNN commentator announced that the visit had proved that "Catholicism and communism can coexist." This despite the fact that every homily and address directly challenged the communism of the Castro government, most relentlessly at the point of religious, civic, and political freedom.

It is worth asking what the Pope thought the trip was about. Two days after his return to Rome, he spoke about the visit. "My trip to Cuba reminded me a great deal of my first visit to Poland in 1979," he said to a general audience at the Vatican. "I express my hope to our brothers and sisters of that beautiful island that the fruits of this pilgrimage may be similar to the fruits of that first pilgrimage to Poland." Reporters might ask General Jaruzelski what that trip meant for the coexistence of Catholicism and communism in Poland. John Paul believes the visit was the beginning of another revolution in Cuba: "I gave thanks to God because precisely in that place dedicated to 'the revolution' a place was found for the one who brought the authentic revolution to the world, that of God's love, which liberates man from evil and injustice and gives him peace and fullness of life."

On the outskirts of Havana I sought out the Rev. Pedro Gómez, as I shall call him. He teaches at the Baptist seminary, and he is exultant. "The Pope has done everything just right. He has challenged Castro to the very limit of his dignity as Pope. This is a *kairos* and things can never be the same again." Asked about Fidel's motives, he says, "I don't know. Fidel no doubt has his plans. But this I know: God has his plans, and the Pope is His instrument for opening Cuba to the gospel of Jesus Christ." The Rev. Gómez knows Jaime Cardinal Ortega, the archbishop of Havana, very well. In the 1960s they were sentenced to three years in Castro's labor camps where they worked together every day. "I trust Ortega entirely. He is very politic, but he is a real Christian who has given himself entirely to Christ and the Church."

Some speak of a "bad cop/good cop" connection between Ortega and Archbishop Meurice of Santiago. The latter confronts the regime, the former negotiates with it. Repeatedly during the visit, the Pope emphasized that change must be peaceful and gradual, not apocalyptic. Everyone agrees that the Church is in a stronger position because the bishops of the eleven dioceses are completely united. In addition to the release of political prisoners and greater freedom, their demands on the government, framed as requests, are modest: a printing press and access to radio and television; chaplains in hospitals and prisons; admission to Cuba of priests and religious from other countries; the operation of Catholic social services independent of state control; and, somewhere down the line, the reopening of Catholic schools. But of course such "modest" steps mean the end of the revolution of the past forty years.

And what about the U.S. embargo? Lifting it would deprive Castro of his last desperate excuse for the catastrophe that his revolution has turned out to be. Against lifting it is the argument that he would trumpet such a step as a great victory over the hated Yanquis. Let him. Nobody believes that Cuba is wretchedly poor because it cannot trade with the U.S. It has all the rest of the world to trade with. The problem is that Cuba has almost nothing to trade. Maybe the embargo made sense when Cuba was an instrument of Soviet designs in the Cold War, and since it is in place it probably should not be lifted without some quid pro quo. Regrettably, given the disarray of the U.S. presidency and the role of Cuban exiles in our congressional elections, no action of any sort is likely soon. But surely John Paul is right in saying that Cuba must open itself to the world and the world to Cuba. Toward that end, I believe a convincing case can be made that the embargo should be lifted.

It was a heady week for the Cuban people. But will it make any real difference? In preparation for the visit, the government filled some of the worst potholes and scarce gasoline and cooking oil showed up in some stores. More jaded Cubans said that, with the Pope's departure, everything would go back to non-business as usual. There was a joke circulating in some quarters: *Cuando se vaya el Papa, se va la papa*—"When the Pope goes, so do the potatoes." A strong measure of skepticism is undoubtedly in order. And yet, barring a reign of terror that would outrage the world and for which the regime may no longer have the will or the resources, what happened this week cannot be undone. Or so I think, and so I pray. It is not Canossa. It is more decisive than Canossa. That was a power contest, and Henry IV eventually regained the upper hand in a continuing rivalry. With totalitarians it is different. It is all or nothing. The party is everything or, in time, it is nothing. The Church's way is the way of pluralism and freedom. "The Church imposes nothing; she only proposes." With that proposal and the response of the people to that proposal, the Cuban revolution has at last begun. FT

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Alabama Standing in the Need of Prayer

David M. Smolin

The controversy over the injunction issued in October 1997 by Alabama Federal District Judge Ira M. DeMent restricting religious activity in public schools, as well as the continuing controversy in the state concerning Judge Roy Moore's courtroom display of the Ten Commandments, can be interpreted as typical manifestations of Alabama's Bible Belt culture, a culture considered by many to be backward, narrow, and bigoted. Resistance by Alabama officials and citizens to Supreme Court precedents regarding religion can appear analogous to earlier official and unofficial resistance to *Brown v. Board of Education*'s mandate to end the long era of Jim Crow. The analogy is made more plausible because segregationism, and in an earlier era, racial slavery, had been defended in specifically religious terms in Alabama and throughout the South. The image of the "good old boy" pious bigot tends to be superimposed upon more recent events, transposing Alabama Governor Fob James into a contemporary George Wallace, and an outraged pro-prayer Alabama citizenry into a virtual Klan mob.

These stereotypes, however, obscure the significance of the recent events in Alabama. It is true, of course, that evangelical forms of Christianity are more prevalent in Alabama (and the South generally) than in most of America. Southern evangelicalism has always, however, cut in more than one direction with respect to race and other issues. The tradition of finding diametrically opposed political implications in the Bible has deep roots in the South, going back to the days when slaveowners repeatedly invoked the New Testament admonition that slaves should obey their masters, while the slaves expressed their hopes for freedom in songs about Moses, Pharaoh, and the children of Israel. A similar phenomenon appeared during the civil rights era, with many whites finding biblical support for segregation, while blacks and a minority of liberal whites found inspiration in the biblical principle of human equality.

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The complex reality of religion in the South is that a single dominant religion—evangelical Protestantism—has simultaneously served three disparate social functions: political and social oppression, political and social liberation, and personal, familial, and social discipline and self-help. This third element—religion as a source of personal, familial, and social discipline and self-help—has in many respects served as a unifying bond in a region that might otherwise be torn apart by racial, class, and ideological divisions. Christianity, moreover, served to temper at least some of the extremes in the dialectic of oppression and liberation, softening social oppression by emphasizing the duties of paternalism and restraining the anarchistic and antinomian tendencies of liberation movements with the leaven of God's moral law.

Alabama's social history is made even more complex by its heritage as a Western, frontier state for poor whites migrating in search of their own land and facing all the difficulties of those who seek to make a living off the land. Many of these poor whites and their descendants were opposed to secession, and deeply resented the planter class. For them, as for so many Alabamians, evangelical religion was a great source of comfort and inspiration in perilous and demanding circumstances.

Remarkably, despite the coming of economic prosperity to much of the state in recent years, the influence of a decadent mass culture, and an officially "secular" public school system, Alabamians have retained remarkably high rates of belief in the doctrines of their traditional evangelical religion. Large majorities of Alabamians believe not only in God, but also in the divinity of Christ and the inspiration of the Scriptures.

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It is a puzzling phenomenon of Southern life that although adherence to traditional Christian dogmas is higher than the national average, adherence in practice to traditional Christian morality is not. Alabama has rather high rates of illegitimacy, divorce, abortion, and violent crime. These statistical rates, however, generally do not represent adherence to ideals of individual autonomy, nor broad rejection of traditional Christian morality. Although Alabama certainly has its abortion and gay rights activists, their numbers and influence pale in comparison with their counterparts elsewhere. For the most part, Alabama is typical of the Southern tendency to uphold virtue and salvation as ideals even when habitually indulging in sinful conduct. Southerners also tend to bluntly describe immoral conduct as "sin," and to be keenly aware of deviations from Christian standards, particularly in the area of sexual morality. Outsiders are often puzzled by this Saturday night/Sunday morning dichotomy, and are unable to grasp why more Southerners do not clearly reject their evangelical heritage. Within the South, however, the high rates of sin that saturate American society make neither the participants nor the observers of such behavior reject evangelical Christianity, but instead have the opposite effect of creating a deeply felt need for the forgiveness, reconciliation, and personal discipline found in evangelical piety. Southern Christians who succeed in keeping their behavior within the bounds of Christian morality feel the pull of the sin-soaked world around them, and deeply feel their need—and their children's need—for evangelical religion to help overcome that pull. Many of those who habitually indulge in the various forms of vice and sin do not repudiate their evangelical beliefs, but instead seem to assume, rightly or wrongly, that they will make things right with God before it's all through. Thus, most Alabamians assume that religion's assistance is a critical source of guidance and strength.

It is this deeply felt belief that only religion is truly effective in answering the needs of the individual, family, and community for guidance and strength that underlies the deeply hostile reaction to Judge DeMent's order. Although the U.S. Supreme Court's campaign to secularize America's public schools has been active for two generations, most Alabamians still support many forms of conduct deemed unconstitutional by the courts, such as prayer and Bible reading in the classroom, and prayer and religious speech at official school functions. The function of socializing and teaching children is, for most people in Alabama, closely intertwined with religion. It is not enough for children to be taught proper rules of behavior: they must be taught that God is the authority for those rules, the source of the strength to keep them, and the bestower of forgiveness and consolation when we fall short.

Most Alabamians are inclined to think of their neighborhood public schools as the people's schools, rather than "government schools," as they are disparagingly called by some among the growing minority of parents choosing church schools or home schools. This ownership or identification with the public schools makes it very difficult for parents to understand why the beliefs shared by the vast majority of parents cannot be applied to the critical task of training children in the schools. These feelings are particularly strong in the less populous, less diverse regions of Alabama. ("Less diverse" in this context refers not to race but to the percentage of persons with origins outside the South.) Although these parents would not want to impose their beliefs on those of other faiths, they encounter few, if any, adherents to non-Christian religions in their communities or schools. They do not understand why the village atheists, or the liberal Christian parents who believe in the Supreme Court's vision of secular schools, should trump the vast majority who want religion in the schools. Surely the minority could be accommodated, they believe, without giving up religion in public school.

The plaintiffs' complaint that triggered Judge DeMent's injunction illustrates the underlying cultural conflict in Alabama. The lawsuit originally targeted the schools of Dekalb County and the City of Talladega, two noncontiguous school districts located outside Alabama's major metropolitan centers. The vast majority of the residents of these districts would be native Alabamians, and Christian in their religious profession. The plaintiffs in the Dekalb County lawsuit are Michael Chandler, an Assistant Principal at a K-12 school, and his son Jesse, a seventh-grade student when the suit was filed. The plaintiffs bringing a complaint against the Talladega City Schools are an anonymous female high school student (Jane Doe) and her mother. Their complaint illustrates the frustrations of families seeking the "secular" educational environment envisioned by Supreme Court precedents in community public schools that as a matter of course employ religion as an agent of socialization. Repeatedly, the Chandlers and Does complained of the children being "exposed," "subjected," or "compelled to listen" to "unwelcome prayer" or "devotional reading." Repeatedly, Assistant Principal Chandler found that his complaints to higher level school officials were in vain. When he complained of classroom prayers, the superintendent informed him that the school board's policy was "to allow religion in the schools whenever possible" on the assumption that "prayer in school did not hurt anything and might do some good." When Mr. Chandler complained about prayer before football games, he was told that it was "a tradition that would not be stopped." When he objected to devotions prior to 4-H meetings held at the schools, he was pointedly informed that "no one else" had

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objected to the exercises.

Religion seems virtually inescapable for these plaintiffs. They complain of prayer and Bible reading in the classroom, prayer before football games, invocations and benedictions at graduation, religious speech and prayer at drug awareness assemblies, prayer at parent-teacher meetings, devotions at 4-H meetings held at the public schools, devotions over the loudspeakers, Bible reading at honor society school assemblies, prayer at pep rallies and football banquets, and Gideon Bible distribution in the classroom.

Systematic teaching of religious doctrine was notably absent from the religious activities in these Alabama public schools. Although religion was used to consecrate, guide, and motivate, no special effort was made to present a Christian worldview, or to apply such a worldview to academic subjects. The public schools did not contain anything equivalent to a Baptist Sunday School program. The schools left the task of systematic religious instruction to families and churches. The schools instead employed religious beliefs already held by the public to advance the pedagogical function of socializing and training the next generation.

There is no doubt, of course, that much of the activity described by the plaintiffs was unconstitutional under case law from the Supreme Court. If the plaintiffs' complaint had merely targeted the conduct covered by those precedents, and Judge DeMent's order had merely followed those precedents, then the order, however controversial it might have been locally, would have been legally unassailable. The plaintiffs' complaint, however, broadly stated that school officials had "required or *permitted* students, parents, and faculty members to engage in a variety of religious activities while attending school events" (emphasis added). The plaintiffs further requested an order prohibiting the schools from, among other things, "permitting . . . or refusing to halt . . . student . . . initiated prayers, invocations, and/or benedictions at compulsory or non-compulsory school-related events and activities and in the classroom." The plaintiffs therefore introduced into the lawsuit the concept that school officials were constitutionally required to prohibit student and parental religious activity, even when such activity was initiated by students.

The Supreme Court, however, has frequently viewed student religious activity in the public school as a form of constitutionally protected speech, and Congress in the Equal Access Act has applied this principle to the protection of high school Bible clubs. Thus, the Court has simultaneously required public school officials, such as teachers and coaches, to be neutral toward religion under the Establishment Clause, while permitting students, as private citizens compelled by law to attend school, to be religiously active. This approach has created a number of questions not yet answered by the Supreme Court. For example, although school-initiated public prayers by clergy or faculty at graduation is considered unconstitutional, the status of public prayers initiated and conducted by students is unclear. Moreover, the degree to which students engaged in traditional valedictorian addresses can lead a prayer, or engage in religious speech, has not been defined by the Court. Similar issues exist in regard to events such as football games, school assemblies, and awards banquets.

Judge DeMent, following the lead of the plaintiffs, decided to try to define the parameters of permissible student religious speech and conduct. The judge's controversial order enjoined school officials from "permitting . . . officially sanctioned religious activity in the classrooms . . . regardless of whether the activity is initiated, led by, or engaged in by students." Some of the judge's comments made it apparent that he might consider "permitting" activity in some circumstances to constitute an implied act of official sanction, and thus a violation of his order. Similarly, school officials were enjoined from "permitting prayers, invocations, benedictions, or devotional messages at graduation or commencement exercises," even when given by a student "in the guise of valedictory, salutatory, . . . or similar student addresses or remarks."

The judge attempted to alleviate the harshness of his order by remarking that he was not proscribing "brief personal expression by a student which contains religious references during a commencement exercise or student address," so long as no audience response or participation is solicited. The "brevity" limitation of student religious speech, in a context otherwise banning it, was made more problematic by the judge's demand that school officials bring immediate disciplinary action against enjoined activity by students in a manner "calculated to cause the cessation of the violative conduct *as it occurs* and to deter similar conduct in the future" (emphasis added). A school official reading this order could reasonably ask if he must bring a stop watch to graduation and time the "religious" portion of every student speech to ensure its brevity. Indeed, the judge's order implied that school officials should be prepared to storm the podium and physically silence students whose religious speech defies the judge's limitations.

Judge DeMent similarly mishandled the issue of other sorts of school-sponsored assemblies and events, enjoining school officials from "permitting" religious speech and activities "regardless of whether the activity takes place during instructional time, regardless of whether attendance is compulsory or non-compulsory, and regardless of whether the speaker/presenter is a student, school official, or nonschool person." This broad language would seem to require school officials to become ever-vigilant censors of every school event, extinguishing every form of religious activity and speech, no matter

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to what degree it is student-initiated or controlled. A student who publicly bows in prayer upon achieving some athletic success, or a group of students who form a circle and ask for God's protection and help before commencing some activity, risk the ire of a federal court. School officials who fail to intervene to physically stop such activity, or punish it, risk being held in contempt.

Judge DeMent further illustrated his determination by stating, in his ban on the use of public address systems for religious speech, that "no exception . . . shall be permitted during times of perceived crisis or exigent circumstances." Thus, Judge DeMent deliberately sought to prevent school officials from using any sort of religious reference to calm a student body traumatized by a tragic event.

Defenders of Judge DeMent noted that he specifically permitted a range of student religious activities, including the wearing of religious symbols, religious expression in school assignments, and religious clubs meeting during non-instructional time pursuant to the Equal Access Act. Even when invoking the Equal Access Act, however, Judge DeMent adopted a grudging approach to religious speech, allowing students to "quietly engage in religious activity during noninstructional times, so long as it does not unduly call attention thereto." The requirement that student religious speech during noninstructional times be "quiet" and not "unduly call attention thereto" stigmatizes and disadvantages religious speech as compared to other forms of student speech. Thus, although Judge DeMent attempted to follow, in some broad way, the Supreme Court's mandate to protect student religious speech, the language of his order consistently sacrifices the First Amendment rights of students to his overriding goal of secularizing the schools. The judge's demand that school officials not "permit" student religious speech places student religious speech in a consistently suspect light, so that it is essentially forbidden unless specifically permitted.

Judge DeMent's determination to enforce his order strictly, moreover, must be considered extraordinary. He ordered that a monitor be appointed with the authority to enter "any classroom or public school property" and attend any school-related event, "for the purpose of observing and reporting on compliance" with the injunction. Judge DeMent also required "mandatory in-service training sessions" for all faculty and administrators, with the intent of indoctrinating them in his interpretation of the religion clause. Judge DeMent—much like the present Supreme Court Justices—seemed to take particular affront at those who would question the legitimacy of his authority, and justified the harshness of his order and enforcement regime by virtue of this resistance. He quoted the words of a school principal, Gary Carlisle, who had publicly questioned whether "a federal judge has the authority to tell school officials . . . how to handle the issue of school prayer," while also asking "if a federal judge can do whatever he wants to whenever he wants to." To Judge DeMent, Mr. Carlisle represented the lack of "repentance" of school officials, and the "depth of resistance" toward his authority.

The school prayer dilemma can appear insoluble on a national level. Most metropolitan areas in America—including the South—are too religiously diverse to make the kind of pervasive religious presence found in Dekalb County public schools fair or practicable. On the other hand, subjecting a religiously homogeneous population to a rigorously "secular" public education obviously is not neutral between religion and non-religion, for it favors those viewpoints that believe that the daily moral, academic, and vocational training of children is best accomplished without the assistance of religion. This belief in the severability of religion and education is itself highly controversial. The language of the Northwest Ordinance of 1787, which implicitly described religion and education as an inseparable unit, suggests that the secular theory of education was not widely shared when the First Amendment was enacted.

A voucher system that includes religious schools would seem to be the most effective means of making government truly neutral on the question of religion and education. In practice, however, many Americans are reluctant to give up the unifying effect of a common public school. The public schools are one of the primary social institutions that bring the community together in pursuit of the common good; it is understandable that many ordinary Americans would resist their fragmentation. This resistance, combined with the self-interested hostility of the politically powerful teachers' unions and the failure of the courts to speak clearly on the constitutionality of voucher systems that include religious schools, suggests that the insoluble dilemma of religion in a single common public school system will persist for the foreseeable future.

The Alabama school prayer case is a reminder that many less populous communities in America continue to defy, to varying degrees, the Supreme Court's secularization of public education. Traditional religious practices in rural public schools often continue until someone is willing to play the role of the "spoiler" and sue. In the case of the Chandlers in Dekalb County, the spoiler role they have chosen can understandably alienate them from the community. Given that neither the father nor son was ever actually forced to pray or participate actively in religious events, nor were they (prior to filing suit) subject to religious harassment, it may be difficult to be sympathetic to their situation. Should an entire community give up its longstanding and essentially noncoercive use of religion in the public schools merely so that this father and son will not have to be "exposed" or "subjected" to "unwelcome" prayer and Bible read-

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ing? Is it truly fair that the village agnostic can employ the authority of the federal government to alter radically the religious and social traditions of an entire community?

Obviously, there is another side to the question. A recent lawsuit filed in Pike County, Alabama, alleges that Jewish children were subjected to coercive religious discrimination and harassment by school officials and students, including being individually instructed to compose a disciplinary essay on "Why Jesus Loves Me," being physically forced to bow during a teacher's prayer invoking the name of Jesus, being forced to remove a Star of David lapel pin and yarmulke, and being regularly called "Jew boys" by fellow students. Having grown up Jewish, I can readily understand why Jewish organizations might want to see the Supreme Court's school prayer precedents strictly observed in every school district, regardless of their current religious demographics. Such broad enforcement would guarantee that wherever a Jewish family might move, they would find a secular public school available to their children, without having to play the controversial role of spoiler.

Most Christian conservatives in Alabama—a state with a well-established and broadly respected Jewish community—would readily repudiate the religious discrimination and harassment alleged in the Pike County law suit. Indeed, most Alabamians, reared in a stated dominated by the Baptist emphasis on "voluntary" religion, would perceive the coercion allegedly employed in Pike County schools as a violation of Christian teaching. However, the desire of religious minorities, whether Jewish, Buddhist, or Muslim, for a "secular" public school system creates some subtle and difficult ethical dilemmas when the egregious harassment and discrimination alleged in Pike County is absent. Do a few Jewish, Muslim, or Buddhist families really have the moral right to demand that an entire community abandon its longstanding use of religion in the public schools, even when such use is noncoercive and accompanied by respect for religious minorities? Does the mere possibility that a Jew or Muslim might someday move into the school district mandate the secularization of the entire system? How do we reconcile the desire of Christian parents for an education compatible with Christianity and the desire of religious minorities for a secular public educational system that treats religion as peripheral or irrelevant to daily life? Do we really believe that the "answers" to these dilemmas are found in the text of the First Amendment?

Such questions are unlikely to be asked, let alone answered, as Judge DeMent's controversial order is tested in the appellate process. Alabama's Attorney General and Jay Sekulow's American Center for Law and Justice apparently are prepared to challenge only those aspects of Judge DeMent's order that infringe on the First Amendment rights of public school students. Prudent religious conservatives recognize that Judge DeMent's limitations on student religious activity are legally vulnerable, but they also realize that challenges to the longstanding Supreme Court precedents banning school prayer by public school personnel will not be taken seriously by the courts. Governor Fob James will continue to use this case, as he has the Judge Roy Moore Ten Commandments case, to publicize his longstanding position that the Establishment Clause does not apply to state and local government. Although applying the Establishment Clause to state government does appear to turn the original federalist intent of the provision on its head, the courts will not take the Governor's arguments seriously. Inside Alabama, the ACLU and its sympathizers will continue to prosecute controversial and divisive lawsuits seeking to strip the public square and public schools of any religious references and activities, and then complain that the Governor is using these lawsuits to "distract" Alabamians from his alleged failure to solve "real" problems in the realms of education and welfare. It should become apparent to most, in time, that the Alabama ACLU and the Governor are in a kind of symbiotic relationship that provides both of them opportunities to dramatize their deeply held convictions.

There are no simple solutions to the sorts of dilemmas that have arisen in Alabama. But this much can be said. Here, as in so many other cases, we were in a far better position to resolve our differences through reasonable accommodation before the judiciary undertook to establish itself as the unchallengeable arbiter of our common life. FT

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Playing Defense in Colorado

Robert F. Nagel

The long-standing debate about the legitimacy of the Supreme Court's constitutional rulings has recently been renewed with increased intensity. Traditionally, critics of the Court have charged that its decisions are too often "political" or "unprincipled" or "lawless." The terms of the current debate, as developed in the pages of this journal and elsewhere, go further and raise the suggestion that the federal judiciary has made itself an active participant in a pervasive cultural struggle, a struggle involving fundamentally opposed moral worldviews.

This deeper dispute can be traced in part to Justice Antonin Scalia's powerful dissent in *Romer v. Evans*, the 1996 case in which the Court struck down Colorado's anti-gay rights measure known as "Amendment 2." Scalia argued that voters had approved the amendment in an effort to preserve traditional moral values. And he charged that in denigrating this traditional morality as nothing more than "animosity" or "a bare . . . desire to harm," the Court had taken sides in America's culture wars.

As significant as this accusation has been, Scalia's dissent leaves unanswered a disturbing question posed in the majority opinion. The language of Amendment 2, which was passed in 1992, prohibited state statutes or policies that allowed homosexuals to make any claim of "protected status or . . . discrimination." This meant, reasoned the Justices, that the amendment authorized discrimination virtually everywhere—in housing, employment, insurance, welfare services, education, indeed, in "an almost limitless number of transactions and endeavors that constitute ordinary civic life in a free society." The Court characterized this as "peculiar" and "inexplicable." The question that the majority found so baffling was this: What could Colorado voters have intended to accomplish when they authorized both private and public discrimination against homosexuals in an almost limitless array of circumstances?

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As several law professors have observed, legal authorization for pervasive discrimination might have made homosexuals into social pariahs, isolating them into a kind of inferior caste. Granting Justice Scalia's point that voters are entitled to express traditional moral disapproval of homosexual conduct, what—besides hatred—could have induced voters to go so far as to authorize social banishment? This issue deserves to be faced, especially by those who see *Romer* as one reason to discuss whether conscientious citizens should continue to obey the Court's decisions. Confronting the hardest question about Amendment 2 will, I think, help both critics and defenders of the Court understand more fully whether and how the judiciary participates in fundamental cultural conflicts.

Scalia's dissent did not answer the question because he denied that the amendment was aimed at anything other than preventing "special protections." Moral disapproval of homosexual conduct, he argued, can justify denial of preferences or other special protections. This is true enough, but the plain words of the amendment also prohibited any "claim of discrimination." Scalia's dissent, as powerful as it is, does not help anyone who wants to identify the purpose behind those specific words.

The Court concluded that, except for animosity, no purpose for the sweeping language of the amendment was even imaginable. The hatred of Colorado's electorate being self-evident, the majority felt no need to inquire into evidence about their actual motivations. Indeed, the *Romer* decision, although a free-wheeling product of this era of legal realism, said almost nothing about the historical, religious, or political context of the struggle over gay rights.

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This omission is so odd as to be suspicious. After all, the Court itself described Amendment 2 as an act "unprecedented in our jurisprudence." Surely some curiosity about the conditions that produced such a novel and momentous legal event would have been natural. Moreover, despite the Court's repeated protestations of frustrated puzzlement, no one was in a better position than the Justices to understand why Colorado voters had enacted Amendment 2. This is so because, as I shall explain, the voters were playing defense. This was—or should have been—obvious to the legal establishment from the beginning, because no one plays offense more aggressively than legal commentators and jurists. Viewing Amendment 2 from this perspective, it seems odd in the extreme that the Justices could have convinced themselves that a sympathetic account of the public's purposes was unimaginable. To understand all this, it is helpful to look briefly at some of the social context to which the members of the majority so resolutely closed their eyes.

Colorado for Family Values (CFV, for short) was the organization responsible for drafting and promoting Amendment 2. Its arguments on behalf of the amendment are surely an important source for understanding the purposes of the law. The most influential single publication from CFV was an eight-page tabloid. Some 750,000 of these were distributed by CFV volunteers to registered voters across the state. The tabloid is described by an observer sympathetic to CFV as "the single greatest contribution to the '92 campaign."

The tabloid, as might be expected of campaign material, makes liberal use of exclamation points. The main headline on the front page urges, "STOP special class status for homosexuality." Other headlines include: "Equal Rights—Not Special Rights!"; "Vote Yes! on Amendment 2"; "Colorado civil rights leaders say 'YES!' on Amendment 2"; and "Are homosexuals a 'disadvantaged minority'? You decide!"

A block inset on the front page reads:

> If you do one thing to prepare yourself for this November 3rd election—please . . . arm yourself with the facts about Amendment 2. Militant homosexuals have flooded Colorado's media with claims that they're only after "equal protection." Truth is, they already share that with all Americans. What they really want will shock and alarm you. Please—read this tabloid carefully, cover to cover. We've packed it with astonishing, fully documented reports on the actual goals of homosexual extremists.

The dominant theme developed in the tabloid is that "homosexual extremists" are powerful and have an agenda. This two-pronged claim is developed from many angles, in considerable detail, and with a sense of great urgency. Thus, the tabloid contains charges to the effect that homosexuals want to legalize pedophilia, promote homosexuality in public schools, legalize public sexual behavior, induce Congress to enact a "national 'gay rights' law," abolish the traditional family, suppress "non-'politically correct'" speech, alter the hiring practices of churches, limit the freedoms of business owners, and, of course, establish "special class status." The immediacy of these supposed threats is emphasized by claims about the financial and political resources of homosexuals and by numerous specific anecdotes—about local ordinances already enacted, national laws already proposed, educational literature already distributed, sensitivity training already ordered, preferences already demanded, and so on. Moreover, the tabloid insists that this complex, broadscale agenda ("the shocking truth") has been hidden because "militant homosexuals" have been issuing misleading claims through "their friends in the press."

The argument of the tabloid breaks down into the following elements: (1) A movement exists to further a set of goals called "gay rights." (2) This set of goals represents a danger to the values and way of life of a sizable community. (3) This sizable community does not yet appreciate the extent or nature of the threat to its way of life because although the immediate, discrete goals of the homosexual movement, when taken together, would effect radical cultural change, this larger aim is deliberately hidden. (4) Many of the discrete changes are underway, and it is realistic to believe that the more radical cultural change could be achieved imminently. (5) The community that is at risk from these changes cannot effectively defend itself through ordinary mechanisms of self-government. (6) A state constitutional amendment is a potentially effective way to forestall both the specific goals and the larger cultural changes. In short, the tabloid is intended to rally those who believe that it is desirable to erect a legal defense against something called "the gay rights movement."

Now, it goes without saying that a person who is moved to oppose "the agenda" of the gay rights movement could well hold "animosity" towards homosexuals. But it seems just as plain that opposition need not be based on animosity. There is the obvious but important possibility that one can "hate" an individual's behavior without hating the individual. Moreover, even a person who is uncertain about the immorality of homosexual behavior could oppose the gay rights agenda and, thus, could be persuaded by the tabloid's underlying argument. A voter uncertain about whether homosexuality is immoral might nevertheless worry that the gay rights movement could pose a threat to important moral virtues inherent in traditional families.

Still, while either a moralist or risk-avoider might be moved by the tabloid's depiction of a powerful gay

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rights agenda, the question remains: What except hostility could explain support for the broad legal banishment inherent in the words of Amendment 2? Now we must be more precise. The question as stated is misleading. Amendment 2 only authorized discrimination; nothing in the law *required* people to engage in discrimination. Therefore it is at least possible that voters did not intend that Amendment 2 result in an actual regime of pervasive discrimination against homosexuals. Indeed, public opinion polls rather consistently indicate that Coloradans tend to disapprove of discriminatory acts against homosexuals. So a new question presents itself: If voters did not want or expect the proposed law to lead to discrimination, how could they have expected the amendment to protect the way of life that they valued?

It is here that the tabloid is most instructive. Its theme that homosexual "extremists" are powerful and have an agenda is developed, as I have said, with considerable specificity. And the specific agenda described depends in virtually all respects upon the alteration of legal rules—"militants" are said to want to legalize pedophilia and public sexual behavior and homosexual marriage, and, at the same time, to restrict contractual freedoms and religious practices and non-politically correct speech directed at homosexuality. Moreover, the tabloid argues that these discrete legal objectives have as their linchpin the establishment of "special class status." Thus the tabloid claims that a broad threat to heterosexual society arises from a discrete series of legal "reforms" and that all of these legal changes will tend to follow from one central alteration in the law of discrimination.

To the extent that they accepted this argument, voters could certainly have seen Amendment 2 as an effective (although partial) defense even if they did not intend that it result in an actual regime of pervasive discrimination against homosexuals. Under the logic of the tabloid, the prohibition on claims of anti-gay discrimination would itself tend to protect the way of life thought to be in danger. Even if hardly anyone actually took advantage of the right to discriminate against homosexuals, voters might think that blocking this key piece of the gay rights strategy would impede other related changes in state law and therefore be likely to help prevent the feared revolution in social norms and practices. In short, given the perceived nature of the "militants'" strategy, Amendment 2 could have been seen as an effective defense, even if no one anticipated that it would turn homosexuals into outcasts.

In fact, Amendment 2 could not work as an effective defense unless homosexuals were *included* as part of the political community in at least one important respect. As explained in the tabloid, the law reform strategy of gay rights activists was powerful in that it was hidden and largely beyond ordinary political control. The fear that the tabloid played on, then, was not fear of change per se but fear of *surreptitious* change. And that fear would have been potent for anyone who saw the gay rights agenda as ultimately threatening an entire way of life. Without adequate opportunity for notice, debate, and consent, the risks associated with such broad-scale change are magnified. Under Amendment 2, the gay rights movement at the state level could still pursue the linchpin of its strategy—but only by way of further amendment of the state constitution. Thus, the CFV proposal would allow for social revolution, but only with some assurance of high visibility and direct majoritarian control. Amendment 2 could achieve its objectives by forcing gay rights advocates to operate openly as a part of an accountable political system. What is manifest, then, in one of the bluntest and most effective pieces of propaganda on behalf of Amendment 2, is that supporters could have been acting, not from animosity, but from a desire to establish popular control over the decision whether to go down what they perceived as a road of social revolution.

It now begins to become clear why the Justices, while quick to condemn the motivations of the thousands of Coloradans who voted for Amendment 2, so studiously avoided inquiring into the social context in which these people were acting. If voters were, in effect, playing defense against a law reform strategy designed to bring on social revolution without popular consent, it must be asked how they ever got the idea that such an ambitious legal offense was a realistic possibility.

One answer is the influence of the national constitutional law establishment on our current political culture. Without this influence it might seem unrealistic, if not crazy, to believe that a profound revolution in social mores could be initiated by a single change in the law of discrimination and—even more unrealistic—that this power could be attributed to a crafty cabal of gay rights "militants." Even admitting that one change can induce a whole row of legal dominoes to fall, the gap between written prescription and political reality just seems too great. Without broad popular support, how will the first legal change be used to induce a whole series of changes? And without strong consensus, how will these new rules bind the enforcers? How will the enforcers, even if motivated, get the resources? How will the resources be deployed to alter the behavior, let alone the beliefs, of untold numbers of people? From this angle, the content of any legal rule is likely to be epiphenomenal, apparently powerful only because rules are carried along on some vast tide of cultural transformation.

This commonsense view is not, however, fully accepted, and nowhere is it resisted more vigorously than among the constitutional law establishment. It is common for constitutional lawyers to talk breath-

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lessly about the profound social significance of "landmark" cases. Many sophisticated law professors and judges have long believed that *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) precipitated school desegregation directly and that this ended Jim Crow indirectly. Indeed, the notion that popular resistance and political pressure were mainly responsible for triumphs in these areas is often treated as something close to a sacrilege. The certitude of the legal elite on this question has been communicated over the years to the general public, so that *Brown* is now a cultural icon.

And racial discrimination is not a special case. In *Miranda v. Arizona* (1966) the Justices explained their famous mandate that police provide warnings about the right to remain silent as helping to maintain "the respect a government . . . must accord to the dignity and integrity of its citizens." The limitations on defamation actions announced in *New York Times v. Sullivan* (1964) were intended as a central part of a campaign to make debate on public issues "uninhibited, robust, and wide-open." The right to abortion first announced in *Roe v. Wade* (1973) was said to protect a woman's capacity to define "her own conception of her spiritual imperatives and her place in society" and was expected to "call the contending sides of [the abortion] controversy to end their national division." This sort of talk is not restricted to Justices trying to justify their decisions in a few extraordinary cases. Scholarly commentators have argued that *Reed v. Reed* (1971), a lowly case that invalidated an obscure form of sex discrimination in Idaho's probate system, eventually brought on a revolution in sex roles. More recently, they have asserted that the single decision in the last seventy years that confines the meaning of Congress' commerce power (*U.S. v. Lopez,* 1995), will usher in a revolution (that word again) in federal/state relations. The professionals (including the Justices of the Supreme Court) who think this way for a living should not have been astonished at CFV's claim that "special class status" for homosexuals would have wide legal and social implications.

Even *Romer* itself—with all of its limitations and vagueness—is thought by some members of the constitutional law establishment to hold potential as the beginning of a judicially led movement on behalf of gay rights. Cass Sunstein, for example, has argued that courts may build from *Romer* on a case by case basis to strike down a variety of "irrational" discriminations against gays and that this process could lead to recognition of same-sex marriage. Others have written more generally about how *Romer* might help produce "meaningful democratic equality for gay men and lesbians" and change "social norms and cultural meanings."

In fact, the academic law journals bristle with various law reform strategies intended to transform heterosexual social institutions. Not all conceive of "special class status" as the linchpin. Some would address same-sex marriage directly, while others see sodomy laws as the "bedrock" of discrimination against homosexuals. But prominent among the proposals is the egalitarian strategy advocated by law professors such as William Eskridge. This idea, eerily similar to what CFV feared, is to enlist the government "to fight social oppression [against homosexuals] . . . through antidiscrimination statutes, hate crime laws, and sex education programs." Sophisticated gay rights advocates in the academy describe themselves as conducting "ongoing guerrilla warfare against bigoted precedents, laws, and policies." They want not only specific legal changes, like same-sex marriage, but broader cultural transformation—the "deconstruction of the categories homosexual and heterosexual."

Academic strategizing in arcane law reviews can have astonishingly significant consequences. Workplaces across the country, for instance, have been reshaped by innovations in the law of sexual harassment that began as improbable academic theorizing. More importantly, this strategizing itself attests to the extreme precariousness of social institutions in modern America. Consider the momentous political and moral consensus represented by the Civil Rights Act of 1964. This statute by its terms and its history was clearly intended to prevent racial discrimination, including discrimination *in favor of* minority group members. Judges and bureaucrats nevertheless quickly converted prohibitions of discrimination into demands for preference. Thus was the public taught the same frightening lesson that emboldens academic strategizers: Just about anything can be done with words. It was this lesson, I suspect, that explains why the prohibition against any "claim of discrimination" was included in Amendment 2. To allow claims of discrimination would have been to allow zealous legal reformers the opportunity to smuggle in the right to make claims for special status.

CFV's argument for Amendment 2 as a defense against an "attack" by "militants," then, could have resonated with voters partly because an elite class of lawyers had helped to convince the public that even clear, stable understandings and practices can be undermined (or "socially reconstructed") through the tactics of modern law reform. These tactics begin with a single, pivotal move and then are pursued with much the same kind of unrestrained energy and commitment as guerrilla warfare.

The fears that produced Amendment 2 included not only the fear of massive, undemocratic change, but also the fear of stealth and manipulation. Covert agendas have always, of course, been a part of politics. But the law reform tradition within the constitutional law establishment has, I think, added new force and sophistication to the tactics of

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secrecy and denial. While it is true that at one level legal reformers openly discuss grand objectives, the very process of adjudication tends to deny these objectives at another. All that is formally at stake in a lawsuit is the issue at hand. It was school segregation that was argued in *Brown*, not Jim Crow. The issue in *Reed v. Reed* was the narrow question of the rationality of sex discrimination in the selection of executors, not whether (as has occurred subsequently) traditional sex roles should be abolished one after another. There can be little doubt that advocates in these and many other cases intend their limited arguments as an opening wedge in a broad campaign of social transformation. Similarly, while the legal arguments accepted in *Romer* emphasized the extraordinary nature of Amendment 2 and intimated nothing about broader questions such as whether limiting marriage to heterosexuals is unconstitutional, advocates are busy trying to convert that decision into a basis for such revolutionary change. A kind of indirection or deniability resides in the very nature of modern law reform adjudication.

In trying to understand what brought about Amendment 2, it is important to acknowledge the complexity of collective decisions. Certainly hatred of homosexuals exists and probably played some part in the vote. Without question American history includes many extreme and hateful defensive measures. Violence, segregation, and expulsion have repeatedly been used against an array of minority groups. But these ugly techniques isolate people physically. What is different about Amendment 2 is its oddly abstract, legalistic quality.

This peculiarity, I have argued, raises the possibility that in a sense the proponents of Amendment 2 were children of the constitutional law establishment. In my opinion, their effort to protect a way of life was evidence not so much of hatred as of a touchingly innocent American commitment to legalism. It is clear that at least the leaders of CFV believed that if the rules permitted an offense, they would also permit a defense—and that a neutral arbiter would say so. Thus, even in their suspiciousness and alienation, the proponents of Amendment 2 did not fully recognize whom they were playing against: they ignored the Justices. But in this, too, they were children of legalism, accepting the judges' traditional insistence on a pose of objectivity. Ironically, that insistence would prove essential to the Court's conclusion that Amendment 2 was inexplicable except on the basis of animosity, for in *Romer* the Justices, squeezing their eyes shut, pretended that they and the rest of the legal establishment were not part of the social context that makes Amendment 2 understandable.

Perhaps it is a sign of prejudice for fearful people, buffeted by rapid change and stripped of a sense of control, to play defense against reformist aspirations. Perhaps the Court in *Romer* could have explained why it was wrong and unenlightened for Colorado voters to try to protect a way of life. However that may be, what the justices in *Romer* did not want to think about is worth thinking about. It seems quite possible that in the years ahead the pace of social change will only accelerate and that many Americans, caught up in large and uncontrollable forces, will feel increasingly frightened, isolated, and unable to control their lives. Moreover, lawyers and judges seem likely to continue to play a major role in producing this destabilization and alienation. Among other questions the legal establishment might ponder is what people in such a condition will do if their naive faith in legalistic defenses is destroyed. FT

Willing

Psalm 85

God once smiled on Israel,
Returned them from captivity,
  Forgotten and forgiven.
Now think of us, let us remember
More than anger, more than children
  Heaped before their fathers.
Speak us peace, and all who are not
Fools must listen. Blow one kiss
  And dandelions, truth
Will sprout through cracking sidewalks, wild
Puffballs, fierce and multiplying.
  The second kiss brings rain.

Laurance Wieder

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The Catholic Church and the Holocaust

On March 16, 1998, the Holy See released a long-awaited statement on the Church and the Holocaust, "We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah." ("Shoah," which in its original Hebrew usage referred to destruction or ruin, is preferred by some over "Holocaust," which means burnt offering.) The statement was prepared by the Vatican's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, whose president is Edward Idris Cardinal Cassidy. Herewith the text of the statement, together with a cover letter from Pope John Paul II.

To my venerable brother, Cardinal Edward Idris Cassidy.

On numerous occasions during my pontificate I have recalled with a sense of deep sorrow the sufferings of the Jewish people during the Second World War. The crime which has become known as the Shoah remains an indelible stain on the history of the century that is coming to a close.

As we prepare for the beginning of the third millennium of Christianity, the Church is aware that the joy of a jubilee is above all the joy that is based on the forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with God and neighbor. Therefore she encourages her sons and daughters to purify their hearts, through repentance of past errors and infidelities. She calls them to place themselves humbly before the Lord and examine themselves on the responsibility which they, too, have for the evils of our time.

It is my fervent hope that the document, "We Remember: A Reflection on the Shoah," which the Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews has prepared under your direction, will indeed help to heal the wounds of past misunderstandings and injustices. May it enable memory to play its necessary part in the process of shaping a future in which the unspeakable iniquity of the Shoah will never again be possible. May the Lord of history guide the efforts of Catholics and Jews and all men and women of good will as they work together for a world of true respect for the life and dignity of every human being, for all have been created in the image and likeness of God.

From the Vatican, March 12, 1998
Pope John Paul II

I. The Tragedy of the Shoah and the Duty of Remembrance

The twentieth century is fast coming to a close and a new millennium of the Christian era is about to dawn. The 2,000th anniversary of the birth of Jesus Christ calls all Christians, and indeed invites all men and women, to seek to discern in the passage of history the signs of divine providence at work, as well as the ways in which the image of the Creator in man has been offended and disfigured.

This reflection concerns one of the main areas in which Catholics can seriously take to heart the summons which Pope John Paul II has addressed to them in his apostolic letter *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*: "It is appropriate that, as the second millennium of Christianity draws to a close, the Church should become more fully conscious of the sinfulness of her children, recalling all those times in history when they departed from the spirit of Christ and his Gospel and, instead of offering to the world the witness of a life inspired by the values of faith, indulged in ways of thinking and acting which were truly forms of counterwitness and scandal."[1]

This century has witnessed an unspeakable tragedy, which can never be forgotten: the attempt by the Nazi regime to exterminate the Jewish people, with the consequent killing of millions of Jews. Women and men, old and young, children and infants, for the sole reason of their Jewish origin, were persecuted and deported. Some were killed immediately, while others were degraded, ill-treated, tortured, and utterly robbed of their human dignity, and then murdered. Very few of those who entered the camps survived, and those who did remained scarred for life. This was the Shoah. It is a major fact of the history of this century, a fact which still concerns us today.

Before this horrible genocide, which the leaders of nations and Jewish communities themselves found hard to believe at the very moment when it was mercilessly being put into effect, no one can remain indifferent, least of all the Church, by reason of her very

[1] Pope John Paul II, apostolic letter *Tertio Millennio Adveniente*, November 10, 1994, 33: AAS 87 (1995), 25.

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close bonds of spiritual kinship with the Jewish people and her remembrance of the injustices of the past. The Church's relationship to the Jewish people is unlike the one she shares with any other religion.[2] However, it is not only a question of recalling the past. The common future of Jews and Christians demands that we remember, for "there is no future without memory."[3] History itself is *memoria futuri.*

In addressing this reflection to our brothers and sisters of the Catholic Church throughout the world, we ask all Christians to join us in meditating on the catastrophe which befell the Jewish people, and on the moral imperative to insure that never again will selfishness and hatred grow to the point of sowing such suffering and death.[4] Most especially, we ask our Jewish friends, "whose terrible fate has become a symbol of the aberrations of which man is capable when he turns against God,"[5] to hear us with open hearts.

II. What We Must Remember

While bearing their unique witness to the Holy One of Israel and to the Torah, the Jewish people have suffered much at different times and in many places. But the Shoah was certainly the worst suffering of all. The inhumanity with which the Jews were persecuted and massacred during this century is beyond the capacity of words to convey. All this was done to them for the sole reason that they were Jews.

The very magnitude of the crime raises many questions. Historians, sociologists, political philosophers, psychologists, and theologians are all trying to learn more about the reality of the Shoah and its causes. Much scholarly study still remains to be done. But such an event cannot be fully measured by the ordinary criteria of historical research alone. It calls for a "moral and religious memory" and, particularly among Christians, a very serious reflection on what gave rise to it.

The fact that the Shoah took place in Europe, that is, in countries of long-standing Christian civilization, raises the question of the relation between the Nazi persecution and the attitudes down the centuries of Christians toward the Jews.

III. Relations Between Jews and Christians

The history of relations between Jews and Christians is a tormented one. His Holiness Pope John Paul II has recognized this fact in his repeated appeals to Catholics to see where we stand with regard to our relations with the Jewish people.[6] In effect, the balance of these relations over 2,000 years has been quite negative.[7]

At the dawn of Christianity, after the crucifixion of Jesus, there arose disputes between the early Church and the Jewish leaders and people who, in their devotion to the Law, on occasion violently opposed the preachers of the Gospel and the first Christians. In the pagan Roman Empire, Jews were legally protected by the privileges granted by the emperor, and the authorities at first made no distinction between Jewish and Christian communities. Soon, however, Christians incurred the persecution of the state. Later, when the emperors themselves converted to Christianity, they at first continued to guarantee Jewish privileges. But Christian mobs who attacked pagan temples sometimes did the same to synagogues, not without being influenced by certain interpretations of the New Testament regarding the Jewish people as a whole. "In the Christian world—I do not say on the part of the Church as such—erroneous and unjust interpretations of the New Testament regarding the Jewish people and their alleged culpability have circulated for too long, engendering feelings of hostility toward this people."[8] Such interpretations of the New Testament have been totally and definitively rejected by the Second Vatican Council.[9]

Despite the Christian preaching of love for all, even for one's enemies, the prevailing mentality down the centuries penalized minorities and those who were in any way "different." Sentiments of anti-Judaism in some Christian quarters, and the gap which existed between the Church and the Jewish people, led to a generalized discrimination, which ended at times in expulsions or attempts at forced conversions. In a large part of the "Christian" world, until the end of the eighteenth century, those who were not Christian did not always enjoy a fully guaranteed juridical status. Despite that fact, Jews throughout Christendom held on to their religious traditions and communal customs. They were therefore looked upon with a certain suspicion and mistrust. In times of crisis such as famine, war, pestilence, or social tensions, the Jewish minority was sometimes taken as a scapegoat and became the victim of violence, looting, even massacres.

[2] Cf. Pope John Paul II, Speech at the Synagogue of Rome, April 13, 1986, 4: AAS 78 (1986), 1120.

[3] Pope John Paul II, Angelus Prayer, June 11, 1995: *Insegnamenti* 18/1, 1995, 1712.

[4] Cf. Pope John Paul II, Address to Jewish Leaders in Budapest, August 18, 1991, 4: *Insegnamenti* 14/7, 1991, 349.

[5] Pope John Paul II, encyclical *Centesimus Annus*, May 1, 1991, 17: AAS 83 (1991), 814-815.

[6] Cf. Pope John Paul II, Address to Delegates of Episcopal Conferences for Catholic-Jewish Relations, March 6, 1982: *Insegnamenti* 5/1, 1982, 743-747.

[7] Holy See's Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, "Notes on the Correct Way to Present the Jews and Judaism in Preaching and Catechesis in the Roman Catholic Church," June 24, 1985, VI, 1: Ench. Vat. 9, 1656.

[8] Cf. Pope John Paul II, Speech to Symposium on the Roots of Anti-Judaism, October 31, 1997, 1: *L'Osservatore Romano*, November 1, 1997, p. 6.

[9] Cf. Vatican Council II, *Nostra Aetate*, 4.

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By the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century, Jews generally had achieved an equal standing with other citizens in most states and a certain number of them held influential positions in society. But in that same historical context, notably in the nineteenth century, a false and exacerbated nationalism took hold. In a climate of eventful social change, Jews were often accused of exercising an influence disproportionate to their numbers. Thus there began to spread in varying degrees throughout most of Europe an anti-Judaism that was essentially more sociological and political than religious.

At the same time, theories began to appear which denied the unity of the human race, affirming an original diversity of races. In the twentieth century, National Socialism in Germany used these ideas as a pseudoscientific basis for a distinction between so-called Nordic-Aryan races and supposedly inferior races. Furthermore, an extremist form of nationalism was heightened in Germany by the defeat of 1918 and the demanding conditions imposed by the victors, with the consequence that many saw in National Socialism a solution to their country's problems and cooperated politically with this movement.

The Church in Germany replied by condemning racism. The condemnation first appeared in the preaching of some of the clergy, in the public teaching of the Catholic bishops, and in the writings of lay Catholic journalists. Already in February and March 1931, Cardinal Bertram of Breslau, Cardinal Faulhaber and the bishops of Bavaria, the bishops of the Province of Cologne, and those of the Province of Freiburg published pastoral letters condemning National Socialism, with its idolatry of race and of the state.[10] The well-known Advent sermons of Cardinal Faulhaber in 1933, the very year in which National Socialism came to power, at which not just Catholics but also Protestants and Jews were present, clearly expressed rejection of the Nazi anti-Semitic propaganda."[11] In the wake of the *Kristallnacht*, Bernard Lichtenberg, provost of Berlin Cathedral, offered public prayers for the Jews. He was later to die at Dachau and has been declared Blessed.

Pope Pius XI, too, condemned Nazi racism in a solemn way in his encyclical letter *Mit Brennender Sorge*,[12] which was read in German churches on Passion Sunday 1937, a step which resulted in attacks and sanctions against members of the clergy. Addressing a group of Belgian pilgrims on September 6,1938, Pius XI asserted: "Anti-Semitism is unacceptable. Spiritually, we are all Semites."[13] Pius XII, in his very first encyclical, *Summi Pontificatus*,[14] of October 20, 1939, warned against theories which denied the unity of the human race and against the deification of the state, all of which he saw as leading to a real "hour of darkness."[15]

IV. Nazi Anti-Semitism and the Shoah

Thus we cannot ignore the difference which exists between anti-Semitism, based on theories contrary to the constant teaching of the Church on the unity of the human race and on the equal dignity of all races and peoples, and the long-standing sentiments of mistrust and hostility that we call anti-Judaism, of which, unfortunately, Christians also have been guilty.

The National Socialist ideology went even further, in the sense that it refused to acknowledge any transcendent reality as the source of life and the criterion of moral good. Consequently, a human group, and the state with which it was identified, arrogated to itself an absolute status and determined to remove the very existence of the Jewish people, a people called to witness to the one God and the Law of the Covenant. At the level of theological reflection we cannot ignore the fact that not a few in the Nazi party not only showed aversion to the idea of divine providence at work in human affairs, but gave proof of a definite hatred directed at God himself. Logically, such an attitude also led to a rejection of Christianity, and a desire to see the Church destroyed or at least subjected to the interests of the Nazi state.

It was this extreme ideology which became the basis of the measures taken, first to drive the Jews from their homes and then to exterminate them. The Shoah was the work of a thoroughly modern neo-pagan regime. Its anti-Semitism had its roots outside of Christianity and, in pursuing its aims, it did not hesitate to oppose the Church and persecute her members also.

But it may be asked whether the Nazi persecution of the Jews was not made easier by the anti-Jewish prejudices imbedded in some Christian minds and hearts. Did anti-Jewish sentiment among Christians make them less sensitive, or even indifferent, to the persecution launched against the Jews by National Socialism when it reached power?

Any response to this question must take into account that we are dealing with the history of people's attitudes and ways of thinking, subject to multiple influences. Moreover, many people were altogether unaware of the "final solution" that was being put into effect against a whole people; others were afraid for themselves and those near to them; some took advantage of the situation; and still others were moved by envy. A response would need to be given case by case. To do this, however, it is necessary

[10] Cf. B. Statiewski (ed.), *Akten deutscher Bischöfe über die Lage der Kirche*, 1933-1945, Vol. 1, 1933-1934 (Mainz 1968), Appendix.

[11] Cf. L. Volk, *Der Bayerische Episcopat und der Nationalsozialismus 1930-1934* (Mainz 1966), pp. 170-174.

[12] The encyclical is dated March 14, 1937: AAS 29 (1937), 145-167.

[13] *La Documentation Catholique*, 29 (1938), Col. 1460.

[14] AAS 31 (1939), 413-453.

[15] Ibid., 449.

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to know what precisely motivated people in a particular situation.

At first the leaders of the Third Reich sought to expel the Jews. Unfortunately, the governments of some Western countries of Christian tradition, including some in North and South America, were more than hesitant to open their borders to the persecuted Jews. Although they could not foresee how far the Nazi hierarchs would go in their criminal intentions, the leaders of those nations were aware of the hardships and dangers to which Jews living in the territories of the Third Reich were exposed. The closing of borders to Jewish emigration in those circumstances, whether due to any anti-Jewish hostility or suspicion, political cowardice or shortsightedness, or national selfishness, lays a heavy burden of conscience on the authorities in question.

In the lands where the Nazis undertook mass deportations, the brutality which surrounded these forced movements of helpless people should have led [observers] to suspect the worst. Did Christians give every possible assistance to those being persecuted, and in particular to the persecuted Jews?

Many did, but others did not. Those who did help to save Jewish lives as much as was in their power, even to the point of placing their own lives in danger, must not be forgotten. During and after the war, Jewish communities and Jewish leaders expressed their thanks for all that had been done for them, including what Pope Pius XII did personally or through his representatives to save hundreds of thousands of Jewish lives.[16] Many Catholic bishops, priests, religious, and laity have been honored for this reason by the state of Israel.

Nevertheless, as Pope John Paul II has recognized, alongside such courageous men and women, the spiritual resistance and concrete action of other Christians was not that which might have been expected from Christ's followers. We cannot know how many Christians in countries occupied or ruled by the Nazi powers or their allies were horrified at the disappearance of their Jewish neighbors and yet were not strong enough to raise their voices in protest. For Christians, this heavy burden of conscience of their brothers and sisters during the Second World War must be a call to penitence.[17]

We deeply regret the errors and failures of those sons and daughters of the Church. We make our own what is said in the Second Vatican Council's declaration *Nostra Aetate*, which unequivocally affirms: "The Church . . . mindful of her common patrimony with the Jews, and motivated by the Gospel's spiritual love and by no political considerations, deplores the hatred, persecutions, and displays of anti-Semitism directed against the Jews at any time and from any source."[18]

We recall and abide by what Pope John Paul II, addressing the leaders of the Jewish community in Strasbourg in 1988, stated: "I repeat again with you the strongest condemnation of anti-Semitism and racism, which are opposed to the principles of Christianity."[19] The Catholic Church therefore repudiates every persecution against a people or human group anywhere, at any time. She absolutely condemns all forms of genocide, as well as the racist ideologies that give rise to them. Looking back over this century, we are deeply saddened by the violence that has enveloped whole groups of peoples and nations. We recall in particular the massacre of the Armenians, the countless victims in Ukraine in the 1930s, the genocide of the Gypsies, which was also the result of racist ideas, and similar tragedies which have occurred in America, Africa, and the Balkans. Nor do we forget the millions of victims of totalitarian ideology in the Soviet Union, in China, Cambodia, and elsewhere. Nor can we forget the drama of the Middle East, the elements of which are well known. Even as we make this reflection, "many human beings are still their brothers' victims."[20]

V. Looking Together to a Common Future

Looking to the future of relations between Jews and Christians, in the first place we appeal to our Catholic brothers and sisters to renew the awareness

[16] The wisdom of Pope Pius XII's diplomacy was publicly acknowledged on a number of occasions by representative Jewish organizations and personalities. For example, on September 7, 1945, Dr. Joseph Nathan, who represented the Italian Hebrew Commission, stated: "Above all, we acknowledge the Supreme Pontiff and the religious men and women who, executing the directives of the Holy Father, recognized the persecuted as their brothers and, with effort and abnegation, hastened to help us, disregarding the terrible dangers to which they were exposed" (*L'Osservatore Romano*, September 8, 1945, p. 2). On September 21 of that same year, Pius XII received in audience Dr. A. Leo Kubowitzki, Secretary-General of the World Jewish Congress, who came to present "to the Holy Father, in the name of the Union of Israelitic Communities, warmest thanks for the efforts of the Catholic Church on behalf of Jews throughout Europe during the war" (*L'Osservatore Romano*, September 23, 1945, p. 1). On Thursday, November 29, 1945, the Pope met about eighty representatives of Jewish refugees from various concentration camps in Germany, who expressed "their great honor at being able to thank the Holy Father personally for his generosity toward those persecuted during the Nazi-Fascist period" (*L'Osservatore Romano*, November 30, 1945, p. 1). In 1958, at the death of Pope Pius XII, Golda Meir sent an eloquent message: "We share in the grief of humanity. When fearful martyrdom came to our people, the voice of the Pope was raised for its victims. The life of our times was enriched by a voice speaking out about great moral truths above the tumult of daily conflict. We mourn a great servant of peace."

[17] Cf. Pope John Paul II, Address to the New Ambassador of the Federal Republic of Germany to the Holy See, November 8, 1990, 2: AAS 83 (1991), 587-588.

[18] Loc. cit., no. 4.

[19] Address to Jewish Leaders, Strasbourg, October 9, 1988, No. 8: *Insegnamenti* 11/3, 1988, 1134.

[20] Pope John Paul II, Address to the Diplomatic Corps, January 15, 1994, 9: AAS 86 (1994), 816.

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of the Hebrew roots of their faith. We ask them to keep in mind that Jesus was a descendant of David; that the Virgin Mary and the Apostles belonged to the Jewish people; that the Church draws sustenance from the root of that good olive tree onto which have been grafted the wild olive branches of the Gentiles (cf. Romans 11:17-24); that the Jews are our dearly beloved brothers, indeed in a certain sense they are "our elder brothers."[21]

At the end of this millennium the Catholic Church desires to express her deep sorrow for the failures of her sons and daughters in every age. This is an act of repentance (*teshuva*), since, as members of the Church, we are linked to the sins as well as the merits of all her children. The Church approaches with deep respect and great compassion the experience of extermination, the Shoah, suffered by the Jewish people during World War II. It is not a matter of mere words, but indeed of binding commitment. "We would risk causing the victims of the most atrocious deaths to die again if we do not have an ardent desire for justice, if we do not commit ourselves to insure that evil does not prevail over good as it did for millions of children of the Jewish people. . . . Humanity cannot permit all that to happen again."[22]

We pray that our sorrow for the tragedy which the Jewish people has suffered in our century will lead to a new relationship with the Jewish people. We wish to turn awareness of past sins into a firm resolve to build a new future in which there will be no more anti-Judaism among Christians or anti-Christian sentiment among Jews, but rather a shared mutual respect, as befits those who adore the one Creator and Lord and have a common father in faith, Abraham.

Finally, we invite all men and women of good will to reflect deeply on the significance of the Shoah. The victims from their graves, and the survivors through the vivid testimony of what they have suffered, have become a loud voice calling the attention of all of humanity. To remember this terrible experience is to become fully conscious of the salutary warning it entails: the spoiled seeds of anti-Judaism and anti-Semitism must never again be allowed to take root in any human heart.

[21] Pope John Paul II, Speech at the Synagogue of Rome, April 13, 1986, 4: AAS 78 (1986), 1120.

[22] Pope John Paul II, Address on the Occasion of a Commemoration of the Shoah, April 7, 1994, 3: *Insegnamenti* 17/1, 1994, 897 and 893.

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Books In Review

Prophet of Nihilism

RESURRECTION FROM THE UNDERGROUND: FEODOR DOSTOEVSKY. By RENÉ GIRARD. Translated by James G. Williams. *Crossroad. 167 pp. $24.95.*

Reviewed by **Andrew J. McKenna**

WHEN WE CONSIDER the seventy years in the twentieth century his country was in the hands of its revolutionaries trying to build a Communist utopia, we cannot fail to discern in the nineteenth-century Russian novelist Feodor Dostoevsky a prophetic dimension—and one in which we may behold an image of our own culture's controversies even after the fall of communism. The crisis he explored in nineteenth-century Russia's belated and vexed encounter with Europe foreshadows the critical confrontations of our own time, as we face the decline of traditional religious, political, and epistemological authority while lost in a fog of competing claims about scientific determinism, groundless freedom, and the latest fashionable ideology.

If we cannot imagine Dostoevsky's adaptation of our culture wars to the debates he stages in the living rooms, taverns, and seminaries of his novels, we haven't grasped the implications of his work—as René Girard suggests in the concluding essay he has attached to *Resurrection from the Underground*, his twenty-year-old study of Dostoevsky's work, now deftly translated into English. The narrator of the Russian novelist's *Notes from the Underground* neatly summarizes the far from completely secularized pandemonium in which we can recognize our own nihilistic climate: "Without books and literature, we are entangled and lost—we don't know what to join, what to keep up with; what to love, what to hate; what to respect, what to despise." The famous passage in Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov*—where Ivan Karamazov tells the legend of Jesus Christ returning to the world, only to encounter the Grand Inquisitor—is perhaps the best example of the novelist's own relentless probing into modern culture's muddled relation to its religious inheritance, the repudiation of which in the name of purely human dominion he views as blindly self-destructive.

But only in Girard's retrospective comments twenty years after he wrote the book do these elements in *Resurrection from the Underground* come clear. With such works as *Violence and the Sacred* (1972), *Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World* (1978), *The Scapegoat* (1982), and *Job* (1985), Girard is the author of pathbreaking work in anthropology, psychology, and, increasingly, theology. But he began his intellectual career in literature, publishing in 1961 *Deceit, Desire, and the Novel*, a study of triangular relations in fiction. His study of Dostoevsky dates from his early (and continuing) work as a literary critic and offers a fascinating window on the sources of Girard's later thought.

FOR GIRARD the key to following Dostoevsky's development as an author comes in *Notes from the Underground*. We so easily admire the extravagance of Dostoevsky's characters, in their variously abject and sublime recklessness, in their rueful and droll frenzy, that we tend to disregard the admonition of his Underground Man, who tells us from his "stink hole": "For my part, I have merely carried to extremes in my life what you have not dared to carry even half-way, and, in addition, you have mistaken your cowardice for common sense and have found comfort in that, deceiving yourselves."

There is a moment in *Notes from the Underground* in which the narrator tries to show his former schoolmates how little he cares for them—tries to win from them notice of his superior indifference: "I wanted terribly to show them that I could easily do without them, but at the same time, I was stamping my feet on purpose. But to no avail. They really paid no attention to me." This moment encapsulates a pattern of behavior that Dostoevsky explores not just in *Notes from the Underground* but throughout his masterpieces—a pattern in which Girard finds a template for our own self-understanding. It is because the indifference of his schoolmates is real that the Underground Man's is so transparently and mortifyingly counterfeit. Their ascendancy over him and his degradation before them are components of a single mechanism that unites thwarted pride and self-hatred. It is the mechanism that will expose him to the icy contempt of his own servant and check his response to the compassion of the prostitute Liza, to whom he bares all his misery and whom he can only think of dominating.

As Girard shows, this is the same unity of pride and self-hatred that wracks the conscience of Raskolnikov in *Crime and Punishment*, who doesn't know whether his murder of an old pawnbroker places him above or below humanity. It is what propels almost all the characters of *The Possessed* to venerate the sovereignly impassive Stavrogin—and what no less surely drives Stavrogin to suicide as he contemplates the emptiness that his detachment affords him. Ivan Karamazov cannot determine if he is responsible for the murder of his father, who inspires in him a hatred that he turns on himself at the peril of his own sanity, as he hallucinates the burlesque taunts of a sycophantic devil "made in his own image and likeness."

THESE EXTREMES of behavior are so many variants of the "underground psychology" that places Dostoevsky, as Girard shows, "in dialogue with every form of Western individ-

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ualism from Descartes through Nietzsche"—the individualism that "took over little by little the prerogatives that had belonged to God in medieval philosophy." Where "meaning is furnished by others in a world devoid of objective values," we find rival doubles everywhere, and this ubiquitous contest divides us against both ourselves and others. In such late works as *The Brothers Karamazov,* Dostoevsky presents clearly the need to discard the Manichean image of some gruesome fiend thwarting our nascent good will, the conceit with which Enlightenment philosophy and its step-child utilitarianism disguised a deluded narcissism. Instead we have to see the devil, "liar and father of lies," as old Karamazov cynically calls himself, in the role of others as they tempt and seduce us with the desires that they model for us and that they necessarily oppose when we try to imitate them. But even such early tales as *The Double* look forward to this insight—though *The Double* still betrays traces of Dostoevsky's early romanticism and the romantic pathology that he would later expose in *Notes from the Underground.*

Precisely because it appears in English long after the wide circulation of Girard's analyses of doubles, scapegoating, and the "mimetic desire" that is bound to discover obstacles in the models whose desires it copies, the temptation is to read Girard's *Resurrection from the Underground* as the application to Dostoevsky of a predetermined interpretive device. In fact, however, what makes this study so fascinating is that precisely the reverse is true: Much of what Girard has gone on to assert about human desire, scapegoats, and the gospel, he learned first from Dostoevsky. The influence that the desires of others has over one's own desires is the lesson that the novelist drew from his own tormented experience as the precocious author of *Poor Folk,* who is first lionized then ostracized by Petersburg literary circles—and whose later participation in revolutionary discussions reflects resentful defiance rather than personal conviction. Girard moves back and forth between the life and the works to show how, contrary to traditional biographical practice, the novels explain the author's social and historical experience rather than the reverse. His disastrous first marriage, in which the role of the rival (two in fact) is paramount, is only later illuminated by *The Eternal Husband,* which comically portrays a man perversely pursuing his deceased wife's seducer in order to validate his next conjugal choice.

The picture of literature that emerges in Girard's study is that of a method of investigation that makes nothing less than the "objective truth" of human relations available to our comprehension. Girard lends robust support to Dostoevsky's claims that "art is always actual and real, and has never existed in any other way" and that a fully achieved realism is ultimately and integrally religious. From the beginning chapter entitled "Descent into the Inferno" to "Resurrection," the last, Girard traces the novelist's painful self-discovery in stages that account for the progress from *Crime and Punishment* to *The Idiot* and from *The Possessed* to *The Brothers Karamazov.* His last work gathers all the disparate themes of earlier ones into a unifying religious and aesthetic vision that is continuous with biblical revelation.

James G. Williams, the translator of *Resurrection from the Underground,* emphasizes in his preface how Girard explores the biblical imagery both of the pride that separates us from one another and the love that gathers us together. Girard shows that for Dostoevsky evil comes down to "pure choice" between pride and love, as exemplified in the Legend of the Grand Inquisitor by the silent kiss that Christ bestows on his tormentor, by the Grand Inquisitor's rejection of that kiss, and by Ivan Karamazov's indecision before the clear implications of his own legend. When, at the end of their conversation, Alyosha Karamazov kisses his brother, whom he calls his own tempter, he is accused mockingly of "plagiarism." This is Dostoevsky's trope for the *imitatio christi* that Alyosha believes is the antidote to Ivan's proud and anguished rebellion. The "unconditional love" that the dying elder Zossima bequeaths to the world in Dostoevsky's masterpiece is not just a matter of religious sublimity, but a pragmatic necessity: the unique alternative to the destructive cycles of pride and humiliation, of domination and servitude, that for Dostoevsky inhere potentially in all our dealings with one another.

In his new concluding essay, Girard clarifies our present-day links with Dostoevsky's world and his "crucible of doubt," as he styled his life. Girard's Dostoevsky uncovers no mysterious depths; we find none of the miasmic lowlands of the Russian soul celebrated by Virginia Woolf in a famous essay on Russian writers. But even Woolf found herself forced to admit that such works as *Crime and Punishment* and *The Brothers Karamazov* lead us to "understanding more than we have ever understood before, and receiving such revelations as we are wont to get only from the press of life at its fullest." René Girard knows what only the finest literary critics know: We cannot explain Dostoevsky's novels; those novels explain us.

Patterns of Unorthodoxy

American Originals. By Paul K. Conkin. *University of North Carolina Press. 336 pp. $18.95 paper.*

Reviewed by **Walter Sundberg**

In a sermon to the shareholders of the Virginia Company in 1622, John Donne, poet and Dean of St. Paul's, discerned a divine purpose in the Company's desire to settle the American wilderness: "You shall

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have made this island, which is but as the suburbs of the old world, a bridge, a gallery to the new, to join all to that world that shall never grow old, the kingdom of heaven." What Donne prophesied came true. Each generation of Americans has attached itself to powerful and ever-renewing spiritual energies, with the consequence that religion has never grown old here. Instead it has been an innovative force. But this innovation has often been undisciplined and unpredictable, taking on strange forms that would have shocked the orthodox Donne.

In what European country of the eighteenth century, for example, would the scientist Joseph Priestley be allowed to lecture on religion to the heads of government, denying the Trinity, the Incarnation, indeed any form of spiritual substance, while yet affirming that the man Jesus literally rose from the dead? Priestley did exactly that in Philadelphia in 1796 and President George Washington invited him over to his residence for tea and further conversation. Where else but in America could twenty thousand backwoods people, black and white, caught up in a bizarre, four-day, spiritual hysteria of dancing, jerking, barking, and fainting become a decisive event in the history of the religious life of the nation whose effects continue two hundred years later? But that is precisely the meaning of the Cane Ridge Camp Meeting in Bourbon County, Kentucky, in 1801. What Christian nation has ever produced a sect remotely like the Mormons, let alone allowed them to flourish? Who can

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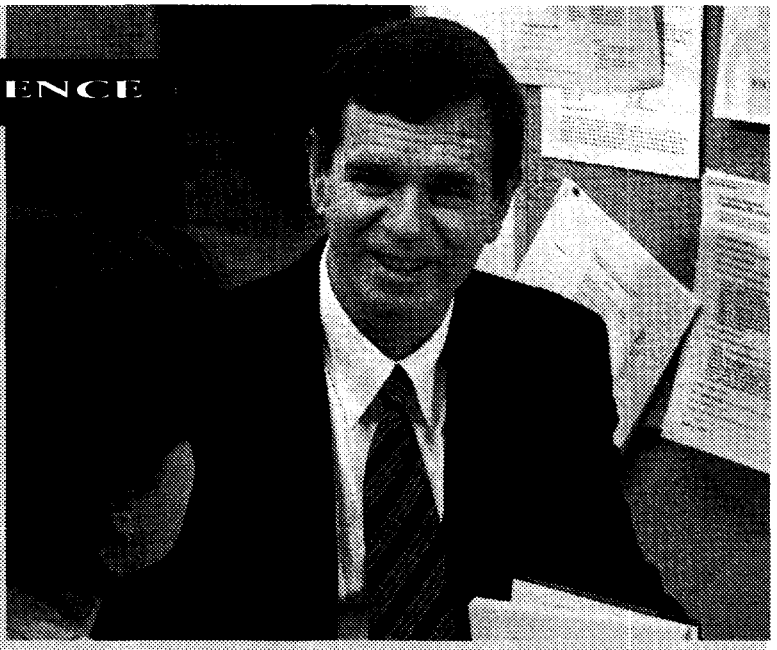

C. Stephen Evans

Ph.D. from Yale; author of *The Historical Christ and the Jesus of Faith* (Oxford University Press, 1996) and *Why Believe? Reason and Mystery as Pointers to God* (William B. Eerdmans, 1996), honored by *Christianity Today* as one of its top books of the year in 1997; internationally known scholar on the life and thought of Soren Kierkegaard; editor for *Books and Culture*; Calvin philosophy professor.

John E. Hare

British-born, Ph.D. from Princeton; author of *The Moral Gap* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1996); former staff associate in the House of Representatives' Foreign Affairs Committee and American Philosophical Association Congressional Fellow; international reputation in Christian ethics and the morality of war and nuclear deterrence; Calvin professor of philosophy

Del Ratzsch

Ph.D. from the University of Massachusetts; author of *The Battle of Beginnings: Why Neither Side is Winning the Creation-Evolution Debate* (Inter Varsity Press, 1996), named by *Christianity Today* as one of the top books of the year; widely known scholar in the philosophy of science and in the relationship of science and religion; professor of philosophy at Calvin.

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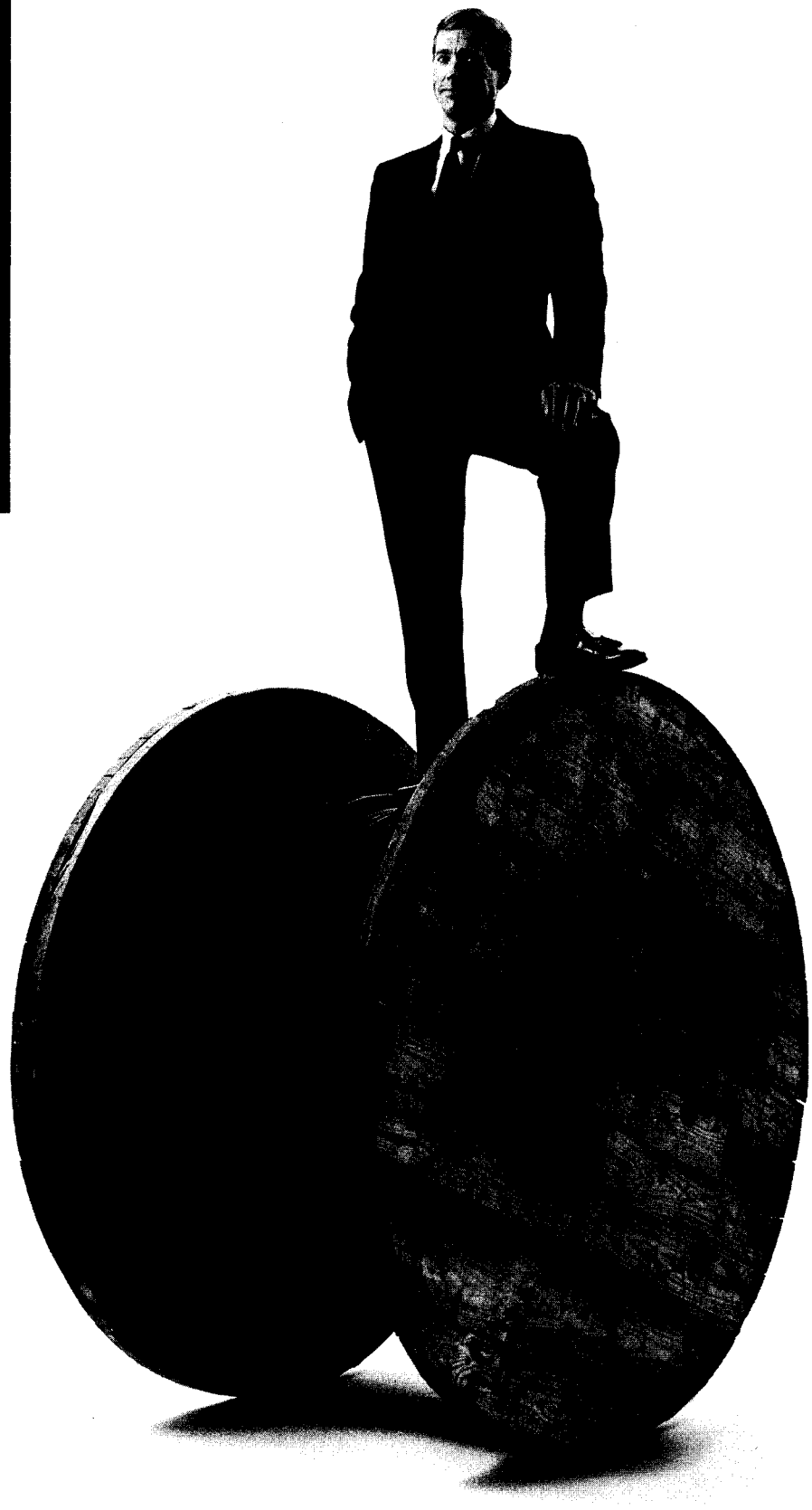

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imagine American religious history without the likes of Ralph Waldo Emerson, Mary Baker Eddy, or Aimee Semple McPherson?

IN HIS ABSORBING NEW STUDY, Paul K. Conkin of Vanderbilt University examines this exotic material—what he calls "American originals"—in order to gain perspective on the uniqueness of the American religious pulse. In six lengthy essays, each of which could stand on its own, he describes the historical origins and theologies of a host of denominations, organizing them under typological categories: the Christian Church and Disciples of Christ represent "Restorative Christianity"; Unitarians and Universalists exemplify "Humanistic Christianity"; Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses are "Apocalyptic Christianity"; Mormons are their own category; Christian Science is "Spiritual Christianity"; and the Pentecostalist movement is identified as "Ecstatic Christianity." Conkin tells the stories of these churches fairly and takes their ideas seriously. Appended to each chapter is an informative two-page bibliographical essay. If the reader is looking for an accurate guide to Christian sectarian belief in America, or the religion teacher a convenient textbook, then look no further; Conkin's study does the job.

In his "Preface" and "Afterword," both modest in length, Conkin ventures gingerly into the realm of generalization. He notes, to begin with, that size matters. These "American originals" are not small tributaries to the river of modern church history, but a vital part of the mainstream. Conkin observes that the denominations that make up the American originals account for twenty-one million Americans, "15 percent of all Christians, active and inactive, and 25 percent of all Protestants." They exceed the combined membership of the "United Methodist, Presbyterian Church (USA), Evangelical Lutheran Churches, American Baptists, and the United Church of Christ." They are larger than the Southern Baptist Convention considered by itself. Most importantly, their missionary impulse is remarkable: "These originals have been the most successful in exporting American Christianity. Today over half of all Christians in the world who owe their conversion either directly or indirectly to American mission efforts are Mormons, Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, or Pentecostals."

To be sure, these impressive numbers do not apply to groups such as the Unitarians or Christian Science. What these denominations lack in numbers, however, they make up in cultural impact. Emerson's "American Scholar" and "Divinity School Address" are classics

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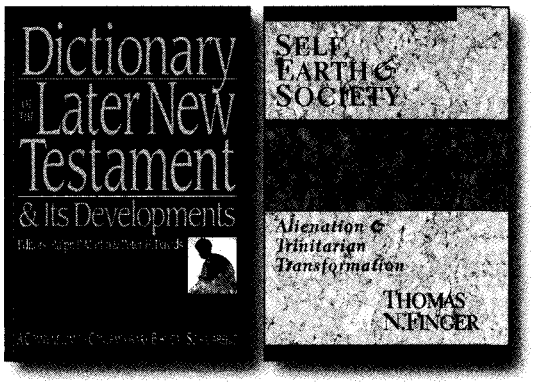
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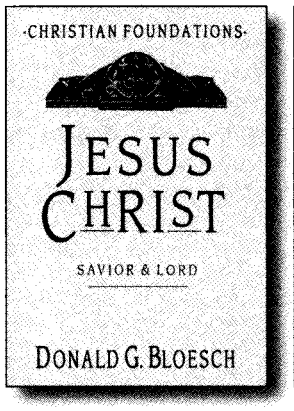

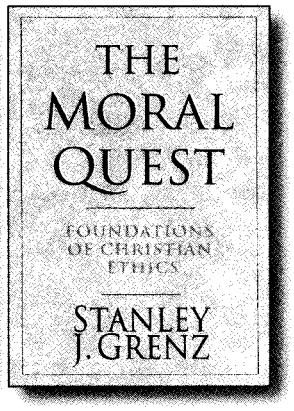

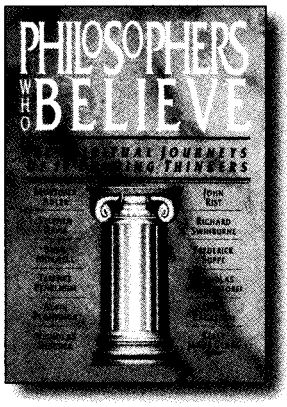

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of American literature. Harvard Divinity School continues to turn out soldiers for the ragged army of Liberal Protestantism. And the Christian Science Reading Room has long been a familiar part of the landscape on Main Street.

Theologically, the originals are all over the map. A number of them are like the proverbial sausage: a close examination of their contents decreases the intellectual appetite. This is certainly true of the apocalyptic types who extracted elaborate scenarios from the books of Daniel and Revelation, as well as in the crude features of Mormon cosmology and in the unsavory story of Joseph Smith's adoption of polygamy. But it also affects one's assessment of the cultured elite. Conkin's treatment of Ralph Waldo Emerson, for example, reminded me how imperious this most famous of Unitarians could be. Take the famous sermon Emerson preached in 1831 against the practice of the Lord's Supper: "This mode of commemorating Christ is not suitable to me. This is reason enough why I should abandon it." Like an immature teenager filled with himself, Emerson turns his impulse toward humanism into sheer, vacuous subjectivity.

DESPITE THE UNDISCIPLINED variety of ideas, Conkin identifies trends of thought. The originals fit into the general paradigm that Ernst Troeltsch long ago defined as the "sect type." They are for the most part suspicious of institutionalized hierarchy in church government, although they are prone to authoritarian, charismatic leaders. Their doctrines of salvation and the church tend to be extremely voluntaristic—before God and before his chosen community, the believer stands freely. An extreme case of this voluntarism is the Mormon doctrine of the baptism of the dead, where even in the netherworld, the ancestors of Mormons, joined to the community by an act of surrogate baptism, are free to accept or reject the benefits of the deed.

Conkin interprets this sectarian voluntarism as a direct attack on the doctrines of predestination and human depravity, twin pillars of Christian orthodoxy that are particularly important to classical Calvinism. These doctrines were rejected as pernicious distortions of the relationship between the divine and human: "Functionally, if not in theory, the departure point for new American prophets was the specter of a Calvinist god (too arbitrary or too cruel), and in reaction to such a god they affirmed the existence of a deity who, by nature, either was finite and thus limited in power or so opened up to the course of human

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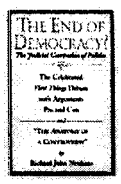

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American conservatism's most ferocious internecine controversy in years erupted when the journal FIRST THINGS published a symposium on "the judicial usurpation of politics," exploring the daring question "whether we have reached or are reaching the point where conscientious citizens can no longer give moral assent to the existing regime." A far-flung debate ensued, engaging scores of contestants in countless journals and newspapers. A new volume collects for the first time the original symposium and the most important responses, with a new 90-page essay by Richard John Neuhaus. *The End of Democracy?* places in the reader's hands everything he needs for a command of the salient constitutional debate of the decade. In addition, an exhaustive bibliography lists virtually every article published about or in response to the symposium.

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history as to allow a degree of self-direction by humans."

Conkin's reflections on the doctrine of God, although brief, are fascinating. He argues that in the effort to return to the pristine origins of Christianity the originals showed little regard for the heritage of Nicene orthodoxy: "An orthodox understanding of the Trinity was not crucial to any of the new denominations and some . . . completely rejected it. Unitarians, Universalists, early Adventists, Jehovah's Witnesses, and Christian Scientists all affirmed unitarian or Arian positions."

The way in which these groups spoke about the oneness of God was also different. With the notable exception of Unitarianism, the originals rejected the inherited metaphysical assumptions of Western dogmatic theology. Against abstract notions of the Good, the True, and the Beautiful, the originals affirmed what Conkin calls "a governmental deity" who is "closely related to early Jewish images of Yahweh, including their earliest concept of a finite, tribal deity, the master of his plantations in Eden and more powerful than the gods of the Canaanites." The originals "were closer to Moses than to Plotinus." The God they affirmed is one who performs miracles in personal lives, who communicates regularly through angelic intermediaries, who is opposed by Satan and his minions of darkness (an opposition that for some will climax in an earthly battle and an earthly Kingdom of God), and whose son, Jesus, is a corporeal deity who answers our hopes and dreams. In some quarters of Pentecostalism, it is Jesus himself who becomes the exclusive representation of the Divine, the so-called "Jesus-only doctrine." However conceived, the God of the originals is not distant and ideal, but intimate and invasive in human affairs, dedicated to the personal fulfillment of his righteous supplicants.

IF THESE ORIGINALS are a powerful and growing force, who in American will speak for Nicene orthodoxy? There is, of course, the Roman Catholic Church, but Catholicism represents a divide that the vast majority of Protestants will not cross. The sorry tale of Protestant mainline denominations remains sorry; for thirty years, they have waged their own war against orthodoxy. That leaves what Conkin identifies vaguely as the only group of Protestants that is larger than the originals: "a somewhat incoherent pooling of all non-Pentecostal American evangelicals and fundamentalists." In American Protestantism, the future may belong to leaders emerging from these factions. I would add to this elements of Pentecostalism that have proven amenable to traditional forms of Christian theology. How these groups adapt themselves to the missionary challenge of Christian faith, both at home and abroad, will be, I wager, central to the story of Christianity in the next century. To prepare oneself for the unfolding of this future, Conkin's *American Originals* is valuable reading

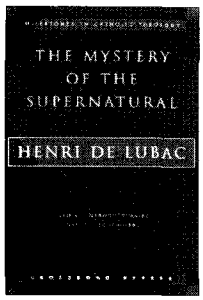
Debating the Founding

THE NATURAL RIGHTS REPUBLIC. By MICHAEL ZUCKERT. *University of Notre Dame Press. 304 pp. $32.95.*

***Reviewed by* Christopher Wolfe**

IN *The Natural Rights Republic,* Michael Zuckert takes up a question that has long divided American historians and political philosophers: "Was the American founding inspired by classical republican, Christian, Whig historical, Scottish enlightenment, or modern liberal conceptions?" Zuckert unambigu-

CHRISTOPHER WOLFE *is Professor of Political Science at Marquette University.*



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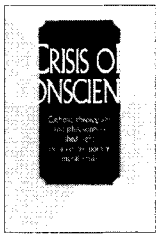

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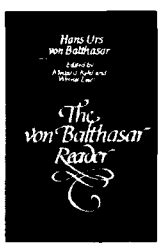

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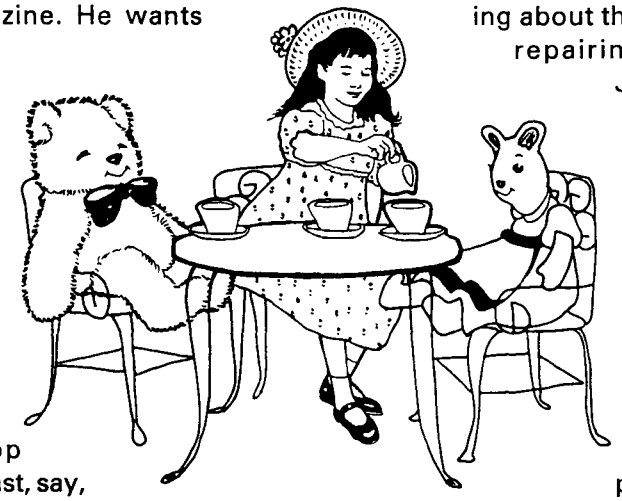
CATHOLICS: "Can't We Just Get Along?" (Sob)

We hear a lot these days about how the Church is polarized, about how we need to find common ground and live together in peace. Sounds nice. But peace at what price?

A revealing answer has come from a bishop writing in *America* magazine. He wants Catholics "just to get along," and to get along it's necessary to avoid mentioning sins such as abortion and homosexual activity. The bishop explains: "To preach against abortion involves facing women and men who regard this preaching as a condemnation of them as persons...." Fancy that! Would the good bishop shrink from preaching against, say, anti-Semitism because he'd be facing people who'd regard such preaching as a condemnation of *them*? Moreover, the bishop complains that Catholic teaching on homosexual activity "can cause a feeling of rejection...." By this logic, clerics should cease preaching against *any* sin, lest some sinner happen to feel "rejected."



The bishop says the Church must show "compassion" for people's "personal struggles," and then complains that the emphasis in much of the Pope's teaching is "not on personal struggle and compassion." The bishop also admits his approach is not Jesus' approach, for he acknowledges that, like the Pope, "Jesus was not exactly wishy-washy about what he expected...." But the bishop remains unmoved, for he doesn't want to be "uncompromising" or "out of touch." So, better to be wishy-washy! Now, we're not in the habit of criticizing bishops, but when a bishop shies away from not only Catholic truth, but the Pope and Jesus in particular, we can't remain silent.

Furthermore, the bishop says nothing about the need for repentance, or repairing to the Confessional. Jesus said, "Unless you repent you will...perish." A cleric who won't call his people to repentance may be leaving them bound by their sins and bound for perdition. This isn't compassion, it's neglect, which, sadly, is widespread in the Church today.

If this is the price of peace, we at the NEW OXFORD REVIEW, a monthly Catholic magazine, repudiate it. Moreover, it isn't peace, it's capitulation — to our decadent culture. It's the "peace in our time" that Chamberlain, winking at Hitler, brought back from Munich, but which paved the way for world war. It's a phony peace which is driving the Church to the brink of schism, for those who wink at sin in order to "just get along" won't be getting along with the Pope. And we bet they won't be getting along with *you*.

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ously chooses the latter: America, he says, is the "natural rights republic"—not in the sense that liberalism was the only element present at the creation, but in the sense that it was the dominant one, and showed a power to "make peace with and indeed assimilate important aspects of classical antiquity and Christianity." Nor is Zuckert's argument merely descriptive—he is very much an advocate of the natural rights republic.

The first part of the book develops the author's account of the natural rights philosophy of the American founding. He offers a painstaking analysis (textual and structural) of the Declaration of Independence, a detailed discussion and critique of other interpretations of the founding (e.g., Garry Wills' and Morton White's), and a close reading of Jefferson's *Notes on the State of Virginia.* The Declaration is interpreted particularly in conjunction with Locke's *Second Treatise on Government* and with contemporaneous expressions of the "American Mind," especially the Virginia and Massachusetts Bills of Rights.

ZUCKERT'S ANALYSIS of the Declaration is generally convincing: he seems to me correct in his "structural" reading of the Declaration as a fundamentally "Lockean" or liberal document. At the same time, his tendency to minimize the importance of religion in the American political tradition as anything more than a useful prop of politics at times appears excessive, as in the quick move, in his analysis of Jefferson's handiwork, from "Creator" to "nature": "Jefferson himself in the Declaration traced . . . rights to the creator, that is, nature." The very use of Jefferson as the touchstone for understanding natural rights philosophy magnifies the tendency to minimize religion. It tilts the board in favor of a certain understanding of American republicanism that would not have been acceptable to a majority of the people Jefferson was writing for when he penned the Declaration.

On the whole, however, Zuckert is very persuasive in making his case for the natural rights republic. His critiques of alternative views are particularly powerful. Zuckert confronts his opponents head-on, portraying them fairly, but then going effectively (if always politely) for the jugular.

Zuckert speaks of "Convergences" in the American political tradition. But for him this means not so much a convergence of equal strands as an assimilation by the natural rights tradition of other traditions: Old Whig constitutionalism, Puritan political theology, and the progressive realization of democracy understood as a variant of classical republicanism. America was indeed, Zuckert says, an amalgamation of these views, but "the natural rights philosophy remains America's deepest and so far most abiding commitment, and the others could enter the amalgam only so far as they were compatible, or could be made so, with natural rights."

Take, for example, the argument that traces American political thought to its Puritan roots. Zuckert surveys various versions of this position: strong continuity (the major principles of the founding can be found in the Puritans), minimal continuity (while accommodating themselves to a Christian citizenry, the leading founders held ideas incompatible with Puritan political thought), secularized continuity (there is continuity through a secularization of Christian concepts, e.g., covenant), and eclectic continuity (political and social theories of Puritanism are one of several major sources for the founding). Zuckert's mode of argument here is essentially negative: his demolition of the strong, secularized, and eclectic continuity theses leaves only minimal continuity in place. The "Lockeanized Protestantism" of the eighteenth century represented a "substantial break with the reigning political theology of the previous century," the God of supernature giving way to the God of nature. The Protestant impulse to deny magistrates the power to serve "the good of

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the soul," which led to a dissociation of the political realm and the spiritual realm, thereby prepared the way for the liberal focus on rights as the central category of politics.

Having dissected the Puritan continuity thesis, Zuckert goes on to the "Whig constitutionalism" thesis of John Phillip Reid and the "classical republican" thesis of scholars such as J. G. A. Pocock and Gordon Wood and shows them to be equally subordinated to natural rights philosophy.

Over time, Zuckert argues, America has developed a successful synthesis of Jeffersonian and Madisonian republicanism. The large and less strenuously republican Madisonian constitutional system is the fundamental frame, but it has become more infused with a Jeffersonian spirit (by, for example, political parties, formal modification of the Constitution, and the mass media), so that it is not so far removed from the people.

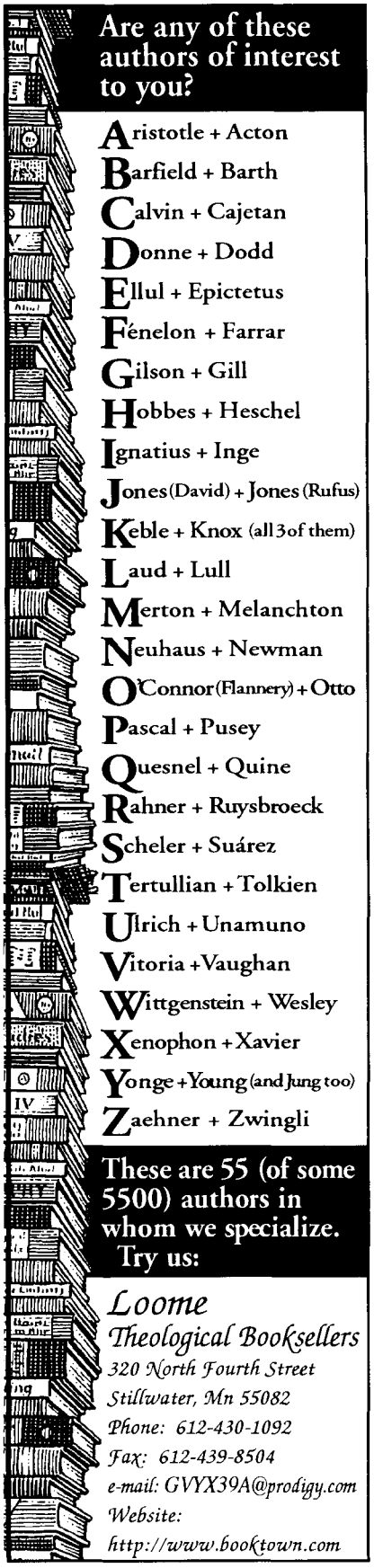
There are tensions, of course, between the "expressive" (participatory) and the "instrumental" (rights-protecting) elements of Jefferson's republicanism. Zuckert joins Madison in criticizing Jefferson on two grounds: 1) his insufficient attention to the tension between the popular right to control government and the rights to be protected by government, and 2) the unlikelihood that Jefferson's localized "ward republics" would supply the energy, competence, and prudence necessary for effective national government. Nonetheless, Zuckert says, the validity of Jefferson's ideals is reinforced by our persistent concern about the quality of democratic life. We live in a tension between the expressive and instrumental dimensions of republicanism. Current debates between liberals and communitarians are simply one manifestation of this tension—a tension that cannot and probably should not be resolved.

A question that Zuckert needs to take up more explicitly is whether one can move from careful textual analysis of the Declaration and other major public documents to such a conclusive characterization of the nature of the American regime. How much do the views of those who are not leading founders, and of the citizenry at large, deserve to be weighed? How much do the premodern elements imbedded in American institutions—e.g., the common law and much state legislation (including, in many states, religious establishments)—count?

Perhaps Zuckert would argue that time has told the story: it is the leading founders and the natural rights philosophy they adopted that won out, and those elements have transformed and decisively subordinated the other, nonliberal elements. But an historical argument is not entirely sufficient, since one might view that victory as unfortunate in important ways, as Zuckert would think unfortunate some twentieth-century developments away from the natural rights philosophy.

Zuckert would, I think, argue that the natural rights philosophy is a superior form of political thought and practice. But that is an argument that requires much more than this book, which is more a detailed explication of natural rights philosophy and its influence than it is a compelling argument for its superiority. Some of us who harbor more serious doubts about the liberal/natural rights/republicanism synthesis, and who believe that many contemporary problems cannot find effective solutions in either contemporary liberalism or in an older liberal amalgam, will remain convinced of the need for a healthier dose of religion and of (non-Lockean) "natural law" in some form.

Whatever one's view of what America needs, however, it is important to understand the general character of the American founding, and Zuckert's book is a powerful exposition of the most central political principles of that founding. Its elegant articulation of its own thesis, together with its insightful analysis and critique of a wide variety of alternative views,



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makes it an extremely important contribution to debates on our national origins, which all serious students of the founding and of liberalism will have to confront.

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God's Work

OPUS DEI: LEADERSHIP AND VISION IN TODAY'S CATHOLIC CHURCH. By VITTORIO MESSORI. *Regnery. 201 pp. $27.50.*

BEYOND THE THRESHOLD: A LIFE IN OPUS DEI. By MARIA DEL CARMEN TAPIA. *Continuum. 364 pp. $29.95.*

***Reviewed by* Robert Royal**

FIRST, a necessary disclaimer: the present writer has been invited to attend Opus Dei conferences, has spoken at events organized by people in the Work (as it is called by members), and has even made a retreat under the prelature's auspices. In my experience, the activities of Opus Dei are better organized, more unobtrusively hospitable, and more clearly thought through than are those of any other organization, religious or secular, known to me. In a church that lately has often mistaken incoherence for simplicity and disorder for spontaneity, Opus Dei breathes a refreshingly competent spirit. The Work, quite clearly, works.

But what does it work at? Primarily, I would say, at developing the spiritual life of those it touches. A few members of Opus Dei have in my presence shown a hint of a cult of personality toward its founder, the now Blessed Josémaria Escrivá de Balaguer. But for the most part, Opus Dei members seem to me as healthy, non-fanatical, and ordinary as any average group of Catholics who take their spiritual lives seriously. The young people in particular seem both happy and happy to have found a solidly Catholic group that encourages them to live good lives in the world of today.

I mention these personal impressions only because these two new books on the Work—one favorable, the other very much not—are themselves personal evaluations of experience with Opus Dei.

ROBERT ROYAL *is Vice President of the Ethics and Public Policy Center.*

NOTHING ATTRACTS CRITICISM like success. In the seventy years since its founding, the Work has grown to almost eighty thousand members, over half in Europe, another third in the Americas, and the rest scattered throughout the world. As Vittorio Messori notes, this movement, which was once thought of as a pre-Vatican II fossil by progressives, has not only survived the heyday of progressive Catholic movements, but continues growing while the left in general, religious and lay, is shrinking.

In addition, Opus Dei is a predominantly lay movement (the number of priests, about two thousand, is kept at a certain ratio to nonclerical members) dedicated to sanctifying people's lives in the midst of their everyday work and responsibilities. That used to be the cry of the progressives themselves. Now that someone has actually succeeded at it—albeit without accepting the progressive religious and social ideology lay movements were supposed to bring with them—the progressives themselves speak darkly of a parallel church that bypasses the local bishops (a false charge), of cult-like brainwashing of young people (to judge by the young people in Opus Dei centers here in America, equally false), and of a sinister right-wing political and economic conspiracy global in its reach (if true, a miserable failure given the current dearth of right-wing regimes on every continent).

Opus Dei came into the world at an unpropitious moment. The memoirs of those who traveled with Monsignor Escrivá as he was hunted by antireligious forces during the Spanish Civil War have a Hemingwayesque quality. At one point, the republicans caught a man they mistakenly thought was the good monsignor and strung up the poor fellow in front of the house of Escrivá's mother. Under the circumstances, the movement might have emerged from the Civil War embittered about secular democracy and committed to restoration and reaction. That it did not, and

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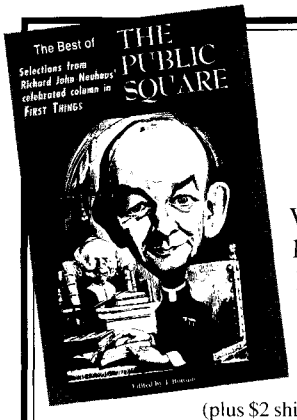
kept instead as its main mission equipping people spiritually to live in the modern world, is almost wholly ignored by critics.

What happens in the Church always has repercussions in the world, and vice versa. It seems that the world perpetually feels the need for a sinister Catholic entity towards which it can direct its more general anti-Catholicism. The Jesuits in their heyday did nicely for that purpose. Now that they have, for the most part, become hard to distinguish from the Zeitgeist, it was probably inevitable that another Catholic scapegoat be found. Spanish in origin, ambitious in its disciplines, unusual in its organization, above all successful, and clearly destined to play a major role in the future of the Church, Opus Dei was a perfect candidate for the honor.

Even the great twentieth-century theologian Hans Urs von Balthasar seems to have been taken in briefly, and characterized the Work as "integrist," i.e., as seeking to impose the spiritual through nonspiritual (read political) means. Von Balthasar later repented, saying that he didn't know any Opus Dei members when he wrote the criticism, and refrained from speaking about Opus Dei for the rest of his life. Members of the Work have challenged critics to point to one political pronouncement by the institution in favor of right-wing or reactionary politics—or any political position at all, something strictly forbidden by their rules. In the current culture wars, Opus Dei's orthodox Catholicism of course orients its members toward predictable positions on many moral questions. But Opus Dei members seem to be able to balance those religious commitments with a variety of political views. If fully appreciated, that fact might go a long way towards explaining this potent lay movement. It suggests that the nature and success of the movement cannot be comprehended in conventional ideological categories.

Under the circumstances, it is unfortunate that neither of the books under review is likely to do much for a less ideological understanding of this remarkable movement. Vittorio Messori is a best-selling Italian journalist who put the questions to John Paul II and Cardinal Ratzinger that resulted, respectively, in *Crossing the Threshold of Hope* and *The Ratzinger Report*. An admirer of both men, Messori also admires the orthodox faith and rigorous practice of Opus Dei. But he began this book, he says, as a journalist, knowing little about the subject, and intending to write a journalistic account of a year spent with Opus Dei members based on "facts, not impressions." He lucidly



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explains a good deal about the internal workings of Opus Dei and the mistaken notions even many "good Catholics" have formed of this new form of religious organization, the personal prelature. But as was evident in the Ratzinger and papal books, Messori writes in an elliptical, European style that does not always translate well into English. Readers already familiar with the controversies about Opus Dei, however, will be informed and enlightened by Messori's dispassionate reflections on those controversies and his explanations of how Opus Dei actually functions.

MARIA DEL CARMEN TAPIA, on the other hand, joined the Work in Spain at an early age in 1948 and rose through the ranks over eighteen years. She spent six years working in Rome with Opus Dei's founder, Monsignor Escrivá, who then appointed her to direct the women's branch in Venezuela, where she stayed for ten years, from 1955 to 1965. There the story becomes complicated. Opus Dei claims she had created a cult of personality of her own in Caracas and has hinted that some sexual scandal also took place. Tapia claims that she was lured back to Rome on false pretenses, held incommunicado against her will, and forced to resign though never directly charged with anything or given a chance to reply to allegations. Shocked in particular at what she describes as Monsignor Escrivá's harshness and lack of charity toward her, she says that it was only after she returned to her family that she realized she had over the years been turned into a "fanatic" by classic brainwashing techniques. She admits to writing this memoir partly for its therapeutic value. And though she states that there are no lurid financial, sexual, or other scandals to be revealed, the main thrust of her book is to argue that the now beatified founder "was not an example of holiness, nor was he a model to be imitated by the women and men of our time." Indeed, she goes so far as to claim that the elderly leader was mentally ill at the time she returned to Rome from Venezuela.

It is difficult for an outsider to know what to make of these charges. Tapia does seem to have suffered some unfair treatment, and the Work has not helped itself by its subsequent explanations. For example, when Tapia resigned and went home to Spain, the government of Opus Dei in Rome refused to give her back her Venezuelan identity card and driver's license. (Tapia had become a Venezuelan citizen during her time in that country.) Opus Dei claimed, in a statement in reply to Tapia's book, that it took this "extraordinary" step because it could not in good conscience allow Tapia to return to Venezuela and cause more mischief. Perhaps so, but it is hard to see how a religious institute may legally and morally refuse an adult member her own official documents. Opus Dei also seems to have refused to acknowledge the truth that Tapia had studied philosophy and theology in Venezuela when she requested records in order to be able to continue graduate work in the United States. Those items, combined with threats to reveal personal behavior if Tapia publicly criticized the Work, do not paint a flattering portrait of some leaders in the central government in Rome at the time, perhaps including Monsignor Escrivá.

But Tapia weakens her case against the abuses that occurred from October 1965 to May 1966, the period between her return from Venezuela and her resignation from the Work, by retrospectively recasting her nearly twenty previous years as participation in a "Catholic sect." Those who have seen real sects at work would find it hard to place Opus Dei among them. Tapia's own latter-day fanaticism shows through here. She criticizes rigorous practices in the 1940s and 1950s, then concedes that many have been changed since her period of formation. In fact, the various reasonable adjustments that took place in ways of dress, practice, and policy—some at Tapia's own suggestion—would not likely have occurred were Opus Dei only a band of rigid sectarians. Tapia cites—rather woodenly—from some of the literature on sects to argue that this or that aspect of the Work's activities reveals its sectarian nature. Of course, a great deal of religious practice, whether Catholic, Protestant, or non-Christian, can be categorized in that way as well.

TAPIA'S ANGRY DEBUNKING of Escrivá seems to assume that truly holy people must be without flaws, this despite the history of the saints from Peter and Paul down to the present. Her anger also leads her to turn every detail about Opus Dei in a sinister direction. Young members may be told, for example, that parents can become an obstacle to a vocation. In the normal course of things, one hopes they will not be.

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But the history of no less a figure than Saint Thomas Aquinas suggests that parental interference may sometimes have to be vigorously resisted for a true vocation. Even Jesus himself warned us we need to "hate" father and mother to become disciples. Tapia's animus toward Opus Dei is so extreme as to lead her to suggest, quite absurdly, that Amnesty International should turn its attention to the work of the Work.

Her description of her own experience contains several anomalies. By her telling, she was held a virtual prisoner—without money or access to the outside world—in the Opus Dei residence in Rome over several months before she resigned. Yet she managed—by using Opus Dei servants, she says—to rent a post-office box and send and receive letters from Venezuela. It is difficult to see how both these elements in her story could be true. The charges against her originated in Venezuela, yet other than the "misogyny" of the priest in charge there and the envy of other female members of the Work, Tapia seems to have no explanation for why she found herself in hot water. Since the charges would have had to be confirmed by several people, one is left with competing explanations for her plight: a broad conspiracy against her or a serious problem on her side to which she is blind.

Tapia's skills as a writer are not great and the whole book suffers from a glut of details without a coherent narrative to make sense of them. Her severe judgment against Opus Dei seems disproportionate to her experience within it—eighteen years of apparently satisfying work compared with six months of possibly mistaken treatment by superiors. Whatever mistreatment may have been doled out to Tapia, any picture of Opus Dei that leaves out the highly successful efforts it has made at forming consciences, spiritual direction, and meeting people's spiritual needs in the midst of their everyday lives has not really addressed the subject.

BRIEFLY NOTED

The Girard Reader. Edited by James G. Williams. *Crossroad/Herder. 310 pp. $39.95 cloth, $19.95 paper.*

It is entirely possible that René Girard is one of the most important Christian thinkers now alive. It is certain that he is one of the most fascinating. In a biographical interview he gave in 1995, Girard declared that all the work he has done over the last three decades was present in his mind even in the late 1950s—as a "dense intuition," a "block" to be penetrated little by little. It is possible for readers to see that now in the torrent of books, articles, and interviews he has produced. His work began to appear in the early 1960s with widely acclaimed expositions of the way triangular relations form among characters in novels, particularly in Dostoevsky. He then moved to anthropology, holding that culture is invariably based on sacrificial violence against a scapegoat. The connection came with his increasing study of psychology and his argument that desire is "mimetic"—that we learn what it is we want by watching what others want. And when at last he turned to explicit Christian theology, he found, bit by bit, the solution: At the center of his thought lies the Cross, the Sacrifice that breaks the cycle of violence, sacrifice, and mimetic desire. But the problem with discerning the unity of Girard's thought was always that different audiences were reading different books from him: literary critics reading one set, anthropologists another, and theologians yet another. That's exactly what makes *The Girard Reader*, James G. Williams' new collection of essays and chapters from Girard, so helpful. Arranged topically rather than chronologically, the book lays out Girard's completed thought and allows the reader to make out the unity of all that the man has done since he first sat down in 1959 to penetrate that dense, complex, and fascinating intuition.

— *J. Bottum*

The Social Meaning of Modern Biology: From Social Darwinism to Sociobiology. By Howard L. Kaye. With a new epilogue by the author. *Transaction. 208 pp. $19.95 paper.*

Evolutionary psychology (an updated form of sociobiology) is a rapidly growing field, and has spilled over into the popular press through articles on the adaptive benefits of such things as infanticide. All of which makes this a propitious time for the republication of Howard Kaye's incisive philosophical critique of sociobiology, first published ten years ago. Sociobiology is a secularized form of natural theology, Kaye explains: an attempt to "translat[e] our lives and

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history back into the language of nature so that we might once again find a cosmic guide for the problems of living." But the attempt fails, he argues, because in order to derive moral guidance from things like genes, sociobiologists first have to attribute to them various cognitive and moral attributes (e.g., "selfish genes"). In short, the sociobiologist first reads his own moral program into nature and then, unsurprisingly, discovers it from nature. Moreover, Kaye argues, these attempts at moral guidance are logically incoherent, given sociobiology's reduction of human beings to "mechanisms," "programmed" by natural selection. What, then, can it mean to talk about choice and values? Evolutionary psychology avoids some of the cruder reductionism of the older sociobiology. But by attempting to unmask all thought and feelings as genetically programmed survival strategies, Kaye warns, it may still "have a corrosive effect on our moral principles, social order, and even our souls."

— *Nancy R. Pearcey*

THE RISE OF THE ISLAMIC EMPIRE AND THE THREAT TO THE WEST. By ANTHONY J. DENNIS. *Wyndham Hall (Bristol, IN). 156 pp. $19.95 paper.*

The title may sound a bit over the top and in some quarters the author will surely be accused of "Islamophobia," but the book has garnered endorsements from influential players in the worlds of foreign policy and defense, and the tone is generally more temperate than the title. Led by Iran, the author contends, militant Muslims press the view that there is a "third way" between communism and the decadence of Western democracy, and that third way is Islam as a world force that transcends national boundaries. In that worldview, what others call terrorism takes on the appearance of eminently sensible strategy. It is not the purpose of this book, but in the discussion of which it is part there is a responsibility to try to distinguish between Islam as a political movement and Islam as a religion with innumerable adherents who want nothing more than to live in peace.

CATHOLIC LIVES, CONTEMPORARY AMERICA. Edited by THOMAS J. FERRARO. *Duke University Press. 274 pp. $49.95 cloth, $15.95 paper.*

A collection of articles about or by middle-aged Catholics, former Catholics, and fellow travelers, this book intends to be a reflection on the state of contemporary Catholicism but is interesting only insofar as it shows the variety of ways Catholicism can be imbibed without being believed. A worthwhile scholarly article by Patrick Allitt about contemporary Catholic conservatives breaks with the autobiographical tone of the rest of the articles and is welcome relief from their self-consciously trendy and superficial treatment of what it means to be a Catholic. The effect of the Second Vatican Council is seen not in spiritual terms, but in how it changed the author's childish perceptions of the world, or denuded the lovely intertextuality of the Catholic aesthetic, or opened the road to Catholic feminism, only to close it later. This category mistake does reveal something about the way many Catholics who have left the Church experience their relationship with their childhood faith, and why they have the complicated and tortured relationships that they do. But as a statement about the "emergent intellectual force" represented by such "cultural Catholics" as Madonna, Camille Paglia, Andrew Sullivan, Martin Scorsese, Richard Rodriguez, Mary Jo Weaver, and Mickey Rourke, the book is simply mundane.

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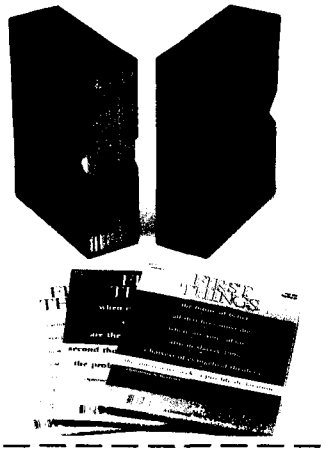

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A Classic Work on America's Founding

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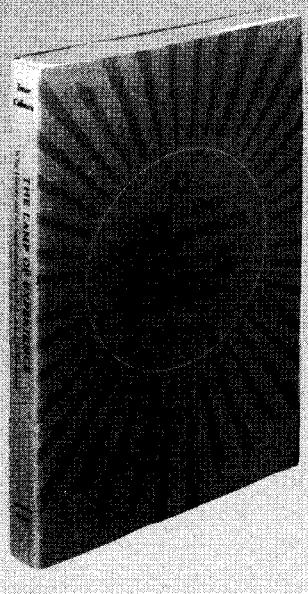

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Trevor Colbourn is President Emeritus of the University of Central Florida.

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THE LIFE OF MARY AND THE BIRTH OF JESUS: THE ANCIENT INFANCY GOSPEL OF JAMES. By RONALD F. HOCK. *Ulysses Press. 104 pp. $16.*

This book is a translation of the apocryphal gospel attributed to St. James the Great, which tells the story of Mary, Joseph, Jesus, Elizabeth, and Zechariah. In his readable and balanced introduction, Ronald Hock, a professor of religion at the University of Southern California, summarizes the history of this most interesting of apocryphal works. Unlike the obviously Gnostic Gospel of Thomas, for example, the Gospel of James is not written in the service of any subversive heresy. Hock argues that it is partly a defense of Mary's virginity and innocence against anti-Christian polemics, partly an encomium, one of the classical genres intended to praise a virtuous and worthy person. Since details of the work are mentioned by Origen and perhaps even by Justin Martyr, Hock dates it no later than the middle of the second century. Since St. James died in A.D 62, and the Gospel attributed to him clearly alludes to the Gospels of Matthew and Luke that most scholars date years later, Hock concludes that the apostle could not be the author of this narrative. St. Jerome concurred, leaving it out of his Latin translation of Scripture despite what Hock calls its "widespread acceptance" in the Eastern Churches. Although not in the canon, this gospel, or at least the traditions to which it attests, has played a major role in fleshing out the sketch of Mary presented in the New Testament. Traditions found in James include that Jesus was born in a cave rather than a stable, that Mary's parents were named Joachim and Anne, that Joseph was an elderly man, that Mary had taken a vow of celibacy despite her betrothal to Joseph, that Mary's birth was announced to each of her parents by angels, and that she was a virgin even after giving birth. The narrative also fills in some interesting details: how the infant John the Baptist escaped being massacred by Herod (he was hidden by Elizabeth while Zechariah was martyred for not turning him over), why Simeon had received the promise that he would see the Messiah (he was Zechariah's successor among the priests of the Temple, and so had a special relationship with the protagonists of salvation history), who were Jesus' siblings mentioned, e.g., in Mark 6:1-3 (they were the sons of the widower Joseph by a previous marriage), and the identity of the "Zechariah" who was killed "between the sanctuary and the altar" in Matthew 23:35 (none other than the father of John the Baptist). Whether the gospel was actually written by St. James or some similarly named older step-brother of Jesus or by someone else entirely, it does attest to the prevalence of some of these Marian traditions even among the earliest Christians.

THE CONSTITUTION AND THE PRIDE OF REASON. By STEPHEN D. SMITH. *Oxford University Press. 203 pp. $39.95.*

This book, which was the source for Professor Smith's article "The Constitution of Babel" in the January 1998 issue of FIRST THINGS, is a reevaluation of the place of reason in the theories of constitutional law and in the Constitution itself. He suggests, after detailed historical examination and an investigation of the secondary literature, that the proliferation of incommensurable interpretations of the Constitution is the result of both the pride of the founders and the pride of their interpreters. In his epilogue, he examines what the state of today's constitutional jurisprudence tells us about the larger philosophical question of whether it is possible to guide a civilization by reason and rationality.

100 ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS ON ANNULMENTS. By EDWARD N. PETERS. *Basilica Press (Granville, OH). 224 pp. $24.95.*

This handsome book, published by a division of Simon & Schuster, serves a felt need, felt all the more keenly as a result of recent popular attacks on the annulment process. The author, a canon lawyer with first-hand experience with marriage tribunals, is thoroughly familiar with the criticisms of the idea and practice of annulments, and he offers a generally effective defense without being excessively defensive. This is not the final word on annulments. Even among those who recognize that the Catholic Church has no choice but to support the indissolubility of marriage, there is an earnest search to improve the present system. But this book is a reliable introduction to the state of the question.

BIOETHICS: A PRIMER FOR CHRISTIANS. By GILBERT MEILAENDER. *Eerdmans. 131 pp. $10 paper.*

The books written on bioethics in the last thirty years would fill a very sizable library. The Christian who simply wants to get a reliable handle on the subject will find nothing better than this splendid little book. Meilaender, a regular contributor to this journal, provides a solid introduction to subjects as various as contraception, genetic engineering, prenatal screening, assisted suicide, and organ donation. It is seldom, and therefore all the more welcome, that one who is a master of his field takes the time to walk the nonspecialist through it. Meilaender does that without a hint of condescension, and with an easy style that will engage those who might otherwise be intimidated by his expertise. Highly recommended.

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THE PUBLIC SQUARE

A Continuing Survey of Religion and Public Life

Richard John Neuhaus

And Now for Something Not Very Different: Real Virtuality

It comes in three fat volumes published by Blackwell, *The Rise of the Network Society*. A thoughtful cardinal friend put me on to it while we were in Rome participating in the Synod for America. The author is sociologist Manuel Castells, a Spaniard now at Berkeley who has over the years taught at universities from Paris to Hong Kong to Hitotsubashi. Virtual reality, according to Castells, is old hat. The new and totally revolutionary thing is real virtuality. The new digitized world, says Castells, segments markets and breaks up the uniformity of a mass audience. "These processes induce the formation of what I call the culture of real virtuality. It is so, and not virtual reality, because when our symbolic environment is, by and large, structured in this inclusive, flexible, diversified hypertext, in which we navigate every day, the virtuality of this text is in fact our reality, the symbols from which we live and communicate."

This is intelligible Marshall McLuhan, he of "the medium is the message" fame. More intelligible, but not necessarily more persuasive. Illustrating what he means by "hypertext," Castells cites Dan Quayle's 1992 criticism of Murphy Brown's deciding to have a baby, followed by the next television episode showing Murphy Brown watching Quayle's criticism and railing against his interference with the choices that women make. Here is what Castells makes of that: "The unsolicited presence of Murphy Brown's imaginary world in the real life presidential campaign induced the transformation of Quayle (or rather of his 'real' television image) into a character of Murphy Brown's imaginary life: a supertext had been made, blending in the same discourse passionately argued messages emitted from both levels of experience. In this case, virtuality (that is Murphy Brown being in practice what many women were, without being so in the name of any woman) had become real, in the sense that it actually interacted, with some significant impact, with the process of election to the most powerful political office on earth."

This is the kind of thing that helps explain why sociology departments are being shut down in our better universities. The commonsensical telling of the story is that Dan Quayle criticized the Murphy Brown program for encouraging wrongheaded behavior, and the Murphy Brown program attacked Dan Quayle as an oppressive prude. There is no evidence that the episode contributed to the defeat of the Bush-Quayle ticket, and at least one person close to the campaign tells me it helped the Republicans. Whether it helped or hurt, all but the thoroughly unhinged recognized that what happened is as old as the orator who puts an empty chair on the stage and proceeds to make sport of his opponent. It is not helpful to call the imagined opponent in the empty chair a "hypertext" or to say that we are witnessing an instance of real virtuality. We are witnessing an age-old instance of the games people play in order to make (usually unfairly) a point. What Castells also fails to point out is that a few years later almost everybody agreed that Barbara Whitehead was right when she wrote her famous article in the *Atlantic Monthly*, "Why Dan Quayle Was Right." The supposedly media-sotted public was quite capable of perceiving the difference between reality and the clever games of a television sitcom.

"The inclusion of most cultural expressions within the integrated communication system based on digitized electronic production distribution, and exchange of signals, has major consequences for social forms and processes." Castells goes on to say what all this means for religion. It is true that religion can employ the new communications system, but: "By having to concede the earthly coexistence of transcendental messages, on-demand pornography, soap operas, and chat-lines within the same system, superior spiritual powers still conquer souls but lose their suprahuman status. The final

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step of secularization of society follows, even if it sometimes takes the paradoxical form of conspicuous consumption of religion, under all kinds of generic and brand names. Societies are finally and truly disenchanted because all wonders are on-line and can be combined into self-constructed image worlds."

Wrong. Wrong. Wrong. Or so it seems to me. The disenchantment of the world is what worries the cardinal, and was the theme of his eloquent intervention at the Synod. Many years ago Max Weber disseminated the message of a world that had been disenchanted under the pressures of science and specialization, but I would suggest that today we are witnessing the re-enchantment of the world. Certainly this is the case in the hard sciences that are taking an "anthropic" turn in disclosing the "irreducible complexity" of a world wondrously designed for a purpose. These developments are winsomely described in Patrick Glynn's recent book *God: The Evidence—The Reconciliation of Faith and Reason in a Postsecular World* (Prima Publishing). All generalizations creak under too much weight, but "postsecular" captures the tenor of our times much more adequately than "the final step of secularization."

And why should a prince of the Church, of all people, fret about the gospel message conceding "the earthly coexistence of transcendental messages"? Christians, and Catholic Christians in particular, have always understood that we live in a world of signs and symbols that do not themselves have a "suprahuman status" but are effective signals of transcendence. They are the sacraments and the words of the Word. And it is hardly new that the gospel must contend against contradictory signs and symbols.

Cassells writes that "the new communication system radically transforms space and time, the fundamental dimensions of human life. Localities become disembodied from their cultural, historical, geographic meaning, and reintegrated into functional networks, or into image collages, inducing a space of flows that substitutes for the space of places." I don't have quotations readily at hand, but I know I have read in the history books almost exactly the same things being said upon the advent of the telegraph, the telephone, radio, and television.

Please don't get me wrong. I do not doubt for a minute that there are nerds surfing the Internet for whom that is a world more "real" than family, friends, or ingrown toe nails. That, too, is nothing new, as witness Walker Percy's marvelous novel of a long time ago, *The Moviegoer*. Nor do I deny that someday the technology of "virtual reality" may be developed to the point where even the less neurotic will have difficulty in differentiating between reality and the images produced. But that day is not now, and our hype about the revolutions being worked by the media can only produce its own sense of unreality. Communicating the truth amidst the cacophony of untruths on sale has never been easy. We will not get any better at it by blaming the media. In fact, the undoubted segmentation of media markets—for instance, the Internet, CD-ROMs, and five hundred channels of television—create stunning opportunities for the concentrated communication of the truth. That the story of salvation is only one mouse click away from designer pornography is but another instance of God's unlimited condescension in becoming man.

Meanwhile, the ten year old who has watched hours of television every day still turns to her mother and asks, "Is that just television or is that true?" Just as the father in the dark of night picks up the little boy who is having a nightmare and tells him everything is all right. The little boy holds on tight, dries his tears, and is immeasurably grateful to have been returned to "the real world." Whenever things like that happen, they ward off the nightmares of virtual reality and real virtuality, and we know again that the world is enchanted. Castells is wrong to think that religion, at least Christian religion, is about things of "suprahuman status," and that the loss of that status is the opposite of religion, called secularization. The Christian truth is the most secular of things—*sicut erat in principio, et nunc, et semper, et in saecula saeculorum.*

It is the world that is charged with the grandeur of God (Hopkins) and man who is the cantor and caretaker of creation (Heschel)—a creation of wonder that evokes and ever transcends all our wondering. The enemies of wonder we will have always with us, and some will come with erudite theories and intimidating jargon to announce, ever so reluctantly, the end of wonder. They should not impress those who know that "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory of the only son of the Father."

FT

REMEMBERING THE HOLOCAUST

"We Remember," the Vatican statement on the Holocaust published in this issue, is tightly packed and bears very close reading. The *New York Times* editorial on the subject also bears close reading. "Critics contend," say the editors, "that Pius XII's silence was a form of collaboration, inspired by anticommunism and the Church's anti-Jewish

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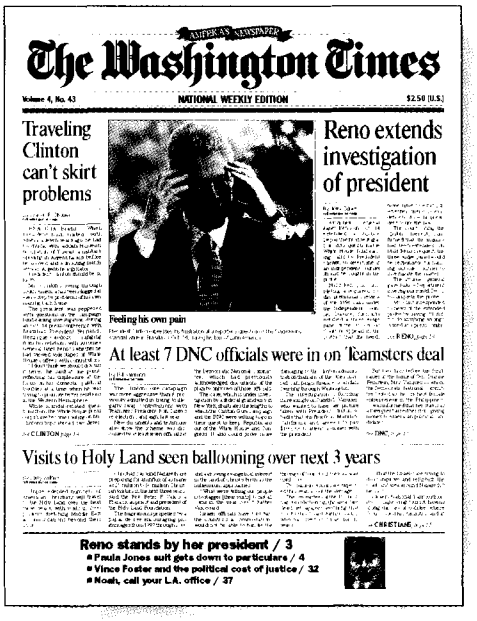
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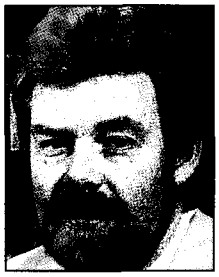

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traditions." The editors leave no doubt they sympathize with, if they do not entirely agree with, that contention. This despite the fact that numerous Jewish voices, including the *Times*, praised Pius XII's outspokenness during World War II. All that changed with Rolf Hochhuth's 1963 play, *The Deputy*. The editors now write that the Vatican statement "offers evidence of church efforts to save Jews and recalls the thanks Pius received from Jewish leaders. It is regrettable that the Vatican has not yet found the courage to discard this defensive, incomplete depiction."

The editors find nothing out of the way in the presumption that they are conducting the trial and the Catholic Church is in the dock. They constitute themselves as prosecutor, judge, and jury in a way that is wonderfully insouciant. One might be permitted to ask when the *Times* will find the courage to acknowledge that its star reporters such as Walter Duranty and Herbert Matthews served as Communist shills in systematically covering up the massive atrocities of Marxist-Leninism. But of course to this very day, after no less than 100 million killings by Communists, "anticommunism" is still a term of opprobrium in the lexicon of the *New York Times*. One might even ask the *Times* about its own silences while the Holocaust was happening, and before that when Jews were desperately trying to get into the United States.

The editorial's supercilious conclusion is noteworthy: "It now falls to John Paul and his successors to take the next step toward full acceptance of the Vatican's failure to stand squarely against the evil that swept across Europe. With its repudiation of anti-Semitism, the new document provides a useful starting point." Now isn't that nice, the editors pat the Church on the head for taking a first step. To "stand squarely" against Nazism apparently means that the Vatican should have become a belligerent and declared war on Germany. There was, of course, the inconvenient fact of Italy's alliance with Germany and later occupation by Nazi forces.

The editors are quite explicit in their criticism of Pius XII: "He did not encourage Catholics to defy Nazi orders." And what if he had done what the *Times* says he should have done? The Hitler government would have correctly declared the Catholic Church, also in Germany, to be an enemy power and faithful Catholics to be guilty of treason. Does anybody in his right mind believe that would have helped save the lives of Jews, or anybody else?

Perhaps Piux XII could and should have done other than he did. We can argue about that, and I assume God has already rendered judgment. But one cannot help but be struck by the contrast between the editorial of the *Times*, so smug and simplistic, and the Vatican statement's recognition of the complexity of moral judgment about people caught in the tentacles of great evil. "We Remember" is subject to legitimate criticism, and we will be returning to that in these pages, but it evinces a humility that comes from an awareness of sin and grace, of historical ambiguity, and of both human frailty and grandeur — an awareness entirely missing from the self-righteous carping of the *Times* and some other, mainly Jewish, critics. Fortunately, other responses, including Jewish responses, to the Vatican statement demonstrate a greater humility and sophistication about the complexities of human action.

FT

THE CASE OF THE UPPITY NUN

Mother Angelica is, as they say, a piece of work. Her Eternal Word television and radio enterprise (EWTN) has become a veritable empire that is said to reach fifty-four million homes in the U.S. and uncounted others in thirty-four countries. She is a woman of definite views, and last November she definitely did not like a pastoral letter on liturgy issued by Roger Cardinal Mahony of Los Angeles. She went on the air to criticize it as a mish-mash of liberal platitudes that sacrificed the mystical to the sociological and came close to denying the real presence of Christ in the Mass, concluding her review with the statement that faithful Catholics owe "zero obedience" to the Archbishop. The Archbishop let it be known that he was not amused, and Mother said she regretted the zero obedience crack but then went on to expand and deepen her critique of the pastoral letter.

Now, according to the spokesman for the Los Angeles Archdiocese, Father Gregory Coiro, Mahony has taken his unhappiness with EWTN to the Vatican. "The Cardinal wants the Holy See to do something about Mother Angelica's whole attitude that she is not responsible to the National Conference of Catholic Bishops or to any of the individual bishops," says Coiro. "It goes beyond her criticism of the Cardinal—it's about how the network operates and to whom it is accountable." The phenomenal success of EWTN has long been a sore point with some bishops. Some years ago the bishops conference raised from the faithful millions of dollars to launch a Catholic television network and it turned out a complete cropper. Then up crops from Birmingham, Alabama, this nun with an attitude who, with a secondhand camera and a prayer, builds a media network that sweeps the field. Just who does she think she is?

Cardinal Mahony wrote her last December,

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"When a network features programs that attack and criticize its own bishops publicly, how can that build up the body of Christ, the Church?" Mother Angelica is of the view that criticizing bishops or anyone else who misrepresents the faith is indeed a service to the Church. While generally opposed to clericalism, Cardinal Mahony apparently tends to the view that it is for bishops and not for upstart nuns to present Catholic truth in public. Fr. Coiro says the Cardinal has invoked canon law, specifically Canon 753, which says that Catholics are forbidden to show disrespect to bishops and specifies that only the Holy See may correct a bishop's teaching. Canon 1373, he continues, provides for "just penalties" for those who break the rules, including the penalty of imposing an interdict, which could mean denying the sacraments to Mother Angelica and her coconspirators.

Mother, it should be noted, has a record of not being intimidated by clericalist threats. At a conference a couple of years ago, she is said to have refused to interview several bishops on EWTN and they questioned her authority to turn them down. "I own the network," she explained. The bishops said she wouldn't always be around to call the plays. "Well," she offered in further explanation, "I'll blow the damn thing up before you get it." As to what Cardinal Mahony expects from the Vatican, Fr. Coiro says, "Is he looking for Rome to slap an interdict on EWTN, which technically would be justified under the circumstances? Probably not, though I wouldn't rule it out. But what other options are being explored, I don't know."

This is somewhat surprising since the Los Angeles Archdiocese under Cardinal Mahony is famed for its hospitality to dissenters from magisterial teaching and its seemingly unlimited devotion to nonjudgmental dialogue with a wide diversity, indeed a glorious mosaic, of views espoused by Catholics. Surely this openness might be extended also to Mother Angelica. His official spokesman notwithstanding, it is simply not credible that a cardinal who is so very tolerant of theologians who call for zero obedience to the Pope wants Rome to slap an interdict on a nun who presumes to criticize him. That could, no doubt unfairly, expose him to the charge of being, among other things, inconsistent.

FT

Confession Time

Le Livre Noir du Communisme (The Black Book of Communism) is, as we have noted before, causing quite a storm among French intellectuals, who love nothing more than storms. Put Lenin, Stalin, Mao, and the Communist bunch together and they killed, by conservative estimate, at least 100 million people. Everybody knew that, or should have known that. The Black Book has raised hackles by insisting that the murderous intent was there from the beginning, that the evil is inseparable from the ideology. For instance, by March 1918, when it had been only five months in power, Lenin's Bolshevik regime had deliberately killed more of its political opponents than Czarist Russia killed in the entire preceding century.

But fur really began to fly over the Black Book's claim that the evil of communism was equal to, and in some ways greater than, that of Nazism. The Nazis, admittedly in a much shorter time, killed some twenty-five million, if one includes a war against the democracies that were allied with the Soviet Communists.

Prof. Tony Judt of New York University tries to sort matters out in the *Times*. "Nazis applied 'special treatment' to the useless people they murdered, Communists 'liquidated' those whom history, in their eyes, had already condemned," he writes. "The road to Communist hell," he continues, "was undoubtedly paved with good (Marxist) intentions. But so what? In the words of the Italian novelist Ignazio Silone, revolutions—like trees—are known by their fruits." (Jesus said something similar about trees and fruits.) Good intentions? Really? Even with the qualifying parenthesis? One doubts Mr. Judt would say that the road to Hitler's hell was undoubtedly paved with good (Nazi) intentions.

Even generally sensible people have a hard time shaking the leftist virus that leads them to insist that there was something "idealistic" about the Communist catastrophe. "Liberals in a hurry," and all that. Mr. Judt finally cannot abide the Black Book's conclusion that Communist sympathizers are as guilty as Nazi sympathizers. He does say that "in the sorry story of our century, communism and Nazism are, and always were, *morally* indistinguishable." But he cannot leave it at that. He then introduces an "analytical" factor that cannot help but bear on the moral judgment. "But if we are not to wallow in helpless despair when it comes to explaining why it came to this, we must keep in view a crucial *analytical* contrast: there is a difference between regimes that exterminate people in the inhuman pursuit of an arbitrary objective and those whose objective is extermination itself."

First, who is it that is in danger of wallowing in helpless despair? Presumably those who, in one way or another, sympathized with or supported communism. For them, as for those who were favorably disposed to Nazism, there is an alternative to wallowing in despair: contrition, confession, and repentance. Second, is the "difference" between Nazism and communism that the former killed for

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the sake of killing while the latter killed to achieve "an arbitrary objective"? However arbitrary (meaning mad), the Nazis, too, had an objective: a racially and ideologically pure super-nation that would dominate world history in a Thousand Year Reich. Mr. Judt, like so many others, cannot recognize that as an objective, no matter how "arbitrary." On the other hand, his argument betrays a still lingering sympathy for the Marxist objective of a dictatorship of the proletariat ushering in the utopian dream of a classless and stateless society. Neither the Nazis nor the Communists believed that their objective was "extermination itself." Their mass murders were not, as is commonly said, senseless. The actions of both made "sense" in the context of the objectives they were pursuing. Their objectives, and the means employed to achieve those objectives, were equally evil.

Why does someone as thoughtful as Tony Judt say that these causes were *morally* indistinguishable and then feel the need to quickly vitiate that judgment by saying they were *analytically* different? Sloppy thinking is one answer. The more important answer is that—in France, the U.S., and elsewhere—it is simply intolerable to acknowledge that Communist sympathizers are as guilty of complicity in mass murder as are Nazi sympathizers. Anyone who is exposed as having sympathized with Hitler is, understandably, a pariah excluded from any position of influence. By way of sharpest contrast, those who throughout their careers urged sympathy and understanding for Lenin, Stalin, and Mao occupy endowed chairs in our most distinguished universities and positions of highest influence in the media, think tanks, and churches of our nation.

That apologists for communism are as morally culpable as apologists for Nazism is a truth that, if honestly acknowledged, would exact too high a price from our several establishments. That is the truth convincingly set forth by *Le Livre Noir du Communisme*, and it is as unacceptable to intellectuals here as in France. Indeed the truth is harsher than that. Nazism was in power for twelve years. Until 1941 and even later, almost nobody, including the great majority of Jews in Germany and elsewhere, thought that Hitler was really set upon a course of mass extermination. In the 1930s there was a widespread disillusionment with the decadence of the democracies. The German economy and national self-confidence were revived; in Italy the trains ran on time, or so it was claimed; and Mussolini and Hitler looked like the wave of the future. Although much more was known by people who seriously wanted to know, the Holocaust, when it did happen, was largely hidden by the exigencies of world war.

Communism, on the other hand, conducted a reign of terror that spanned seventy years. The concentration camps, the purges, the politically perpetrated mass starvations by famine—all were on the public record. Some denied their existence; many more explained their necessity. The means are regrettable, they said, but the end is noble; you can't make an omelet without breaking eggs, and so forth. That was the anti-anti-Communist line that dominated mainstream intellectual discourse in the West. Those who carefully and candidly spoke the truth about communism—and there were many, such as Malcolm Muggeridge, Robert Conquest, Whittaker Chambers, and Midge Decter—were scornfully dismissed as anti-Communists, meaning troglodyte reactionaries. They threatened "peaceful coexistence" with communism, which was declared to be a permanent fact of life.

Yes, there are distinctions to be made, but when it comes to moral judgment they are mostly distinctions without a difference. During the long years of communism's evil empire, more of the brightest and the best belonged to the anti-anti-Communist camp than were ever supportive of Hitler in the 1930s, at least outside Germany. But what does that suggest? That moral responsibility is mitigated by a head count of the like-minded? It also overlooks the now easily forgettable fact that many decent and intelligent people looked with hope to fascism's answer to democracy's apparently terminal illness. It is true that Marxism attracted powerful intellectuals who arrayed it with elaborate and sophisticated theories, and that was not generally the case with National Socialism, which had a strong populist and anti-intellectual element. That demonstrates only that many people are intimidated by intellectuals, while intellectuals are charmed by one another's company. It needs to be added that many felt themselves pushed toward anti-anti-communism by thoroughly obnoxious forms of anti-communism. As for Christians, it is true that the discerning saw the anti-Christian character of Nazism, while Marxism's apologists often presented it as a fulfillment of Christian ideals. But what is to be said of Christians who excused, or even actively embraced, an atheistic attack against Christianity and against millions of fellow Christians for the sake of realizing putatively Christian ideals? Of the making of distinctions there is no end. Whether they make a difference is another matter.

Here is the painful reality to be faced: This century has witnessed a treason of the intellectuals immeasurably greater than that described in Julien Benda's 1927 *La Trahison des Clercs*. Soon, I am told, *The Black Book of Communism* will be published in this country. Perhaps it will stir the necessary debate that is taking place in France. One fears that will not happen, however, among those who agree with Prof. Judt that facing the truth will leave people with no alternative but "to wallow in helpless despair." There is another alternative: self-knowledge, the painful acquisition of wisdom,

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confession, forgiveness, and amendment of life. Admittedly, that alternative rests upon a biblical view of reality. For those who have convinced themselves that that view is not available to them, perhaps there is no future other than that of continuing self-deception or helpless despair.

FT

Getting Ready

There are few things more gratifying than to witness a capable generation of young people eager to carry on what you have tried to do. This business of getting older is of course as old as the human story, but each of us has to experience it for himself. I distinctly remember that as a young man of twenty-five I looked at those who were ten years older as the generation that had failed. My job and that of my friends was to set right what they had, for the most part, so badly bungled. I was viewed, and was inclined to view myself, as something of a wunderkind. In any project or committee, I was accustomed to being the youngest member, and I well remember the shock of the day when in a meeting someone younger than I included me in his somewhat dismissive reference to what was done by "your generation." Or the day I was walking by the police academy around the corner on East 20th Street and was struck by the fact that the city was hiring kids to be cops.

At the same time, I have always had an intuitive reverence for really old people, and have frequently remarked over the years that I rather look forward to playing the role of the wise old man. At age sixty-two that time has come. At least to the young I am the old man. Whether I am wise or not is quite another matter. I expect and even rather hope that the brightest of them think it their task to set right the projects that, for all my limited achievements, I have badly bungled. Such aspirations, or delusions as the case may be, are necessary to keep history moving. Young academics are writing dissertations about me. One asks in an interview if I have any "final thoughts as you look back at your life's work." That's sobering. Now that I'm more than five years beyond that nasty cancer business and am feeling great, I think it quite possible that I'll have another twenty productive years, but I play along with those who are preparing the obituary. It's flattering in its fashion.

And they do sometimes ask interesting questions. For instance, twice in the last few weeks I've been asked about my work routine, and whether there is anything I do to get ready when I sit down to a serious bout of writing. The answer is yes, and that is the excuse for this little reflection on getting older. I begin by praying a prayer of St. Thomas Aquinas, "Ante Studium." Perhaps others might find it of benefit. Here it is, first in Latin, and then in English:

Creator ineffabilis,
qui de thesauris sapientiae tuae
tres Angelorum hierarchias designasti,
et eas super caelum empyreum
miro ordine collocasti,
atque universi partes
elegantissime,

tu inquam qui
verus fons
luminis et sapientiae diceris
atque supereminens principium

infundere digneris
super intellectus mei tenebras
tuae radium claritatis,
duplices in quibus natus sum
a me removens tenebras,
peccatum scilicet et ignorantiam.

Tu, qui linguas infantium facis disertas,
linguam meam erudias
atque in labiis meis gratiam
tuae benedictionis infundas.
Da mihi
intelligendi acumen,
retinendi capacitatem,
addiscendi modum et facilitatem,
interpretandi subtilitatem,
loquendi gratiam copiosam.

Ingressum instruas,
progressum dirigas,
egressum compleas.

Tu qui es verus Deus et homo,
qui vivis et regnas in saecula saeculorum.

Amen

Ineffable Creator,
From the treasures of your wisdom, you
have established three hierarchies of angels,
have arrayed them in marvelous order
above the fiery heavens,
and have marshaled the regions
of the universe with such artful skill,

You are proclaimed
the true font of light and wisdom,
and the true origin
raised high beyond all things.

Pour forth a ray of your brightness

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into the darkened places of my mind;
disperse from my soul
the twofold darkness
into which I was born:
sin and ignorance.

You make eloquent the tongues of infants.
Refine my speech
and pour forth upon my lips
the goodness of your blessing.

Grant to me
keenness of mind,
capacity of remembering,
skill in learning,
subtlety in interpreting,
and eloquence in speaking.

May you
guide the beginning of my work,
direct its progress,
and bring it to completion.

You are true God and true Man, and you
live and reign, world without end.

Amen

I should add that the prayer is always answered, although, alas, I do not always act on the answer, as the readers of these pages know too well. I should also add that this and other jewels, in both Latin and English, are available in *Devoutly I Adore Thee: The Prayers and Hymns of St. Thomas Aquinas*, published by Sophia Institute Press in Manchester, New Hampshire. As for that young woman who wanted my "last words," I will leave that to Him who alone knows what it means to bring a work to completion. For that last word, all of life is a getting ready.

FT

WHILE WE'RE AT IT

■ The ACLU gets morality. An alert reader in St. Louis sends me a fundraising letter from Ira Glasser, executive director of the ACLU, dated simply "Wednesday morning." (I, too, sometimes find Wednesday mornings disorienting.) He writes, "You may be surprised that the executive director of the ACLU is writing to you on the subject of *morality* rather than on law or the Constitution or some civil liberties emergency." But it seems the "reactionary merchants of virtue" are prevailing with the argument that America is in a state of moral decline. "I believe," writes Mr. Glasser, "that we are fundamentally a more moral nation today than we were in the 1950s." He and others are a "saving remnant" who want to preserve moral advances against a return to the oppressive 1950s of racial segregation, of women "limited to the kitchen and bedroom," of "gay men and lesbians forced to live secret lives of terror," of disabled people "furtively hidden and closeted away," of loyalty oaths, and, above all, of women "subject constantly to the risk of death and certain degradation if they needed to terminate a pregnancy." The reactionaries want to limit personal behavior, whereas "the true public morality of a nation is measured by justice and fairness, freedom to be different, to be free of the tyranny of the majority." The worst thing the reactionaries are doing is to campaign against what they call the judicial usurpation of politics. *"If they succeed,"* warns Mr. Glasser, they *"would gut the independence of the federal courts and make them politically subservient to the very excesses the Constitution was designed to protect us against!"* And so he continues in his appeal for help in preserving "civic virtue and the public morality." That the ACLU is attempting to coopt the language of virtue and morality is not uninteresting, but we should not take too much comfort from it. They may succeed. The new tack taken by Mr. Glasser is a plus, however, in that it concedes the point that many of us have been making for years: the culture war is not between moralists and amoralists but is a conflict of moralities; the one grounded in tradition, religion, and concern for the common good, the other premised upon the liberation of the autonomous self; the one accountable to democratic deliberation and decision, the other imposed through the manipulation of the judiciary. "The true strength of great movements has never been political," concludes Mr. Glasser. "Their strength has always been moral." Now that the ACLU has recast itself as the Moral Minority, we may perhaps anticipate a greater measure of clarity in our continuing contentions.

■ The distinction is so elementary that it seems to elude most experts in complexification. When President Clinton and Vice President Gore come out for ending "discrimination" against homosexuals, they put the gay and lesbian cause solidly in the tradition of a civil rights movement that most Americans tend to approve. But David Walsh of Catholic University, writing in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, says this overlooks a very basic difference: "Americans do not wish to deprive homosexuals of their ordinary civil liberties simply because they are homosexual. On the other hand, they do not wish to see aggressive enforcement of homosexual civil rights because they sense that it cannot but entail an equally aggressive endorsement of the homosexual way of life. Homosexual rights are unlike the notion

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of civil rights employed to protect other minority groups. Those who discriminated against blacks or women knew they were doing wrong. Those who disapprove of homosexuality are profoundly convinced that they are right. This is a moral fact of elemental significance, and all sides would do well to take note." Neither, says Walsh, is "neutrality" the answer. "An aggressive assertion of the validity of the homosexual preference cannot be reconciled with a public disapproval of its practices. A neutrality that effectively blocks even the discussion of the moral worth of different lifestyles is nothing more than a political sleight of hand. Like all such deceptions, it cannot long endure." With respect to those who practice what most people continue to believe is a perversion, Americans want to be both publicly decent and publicly disapproving. Depicting the gay cause in terms of civil rights inevitably implies that disapproval is indecent, which—unlike other discriminations associated with civil rights—puts the discriminating in the bind of denying what they believe to be morally true. Prof. Walsh is right in saying this "cannot long endure"—unless people are coerced by law into acting as though they do not believe what they do. Regrettably, the historical record suggests that the denial of freedom can long endure.

■ A retired bishop of the Church of Sweden, which is Lutheran in its way, remarks to a friend, "Christianity in Sweden is like the post office; you can't very well get along without it, but it doesn't figure large in one's life." He thinks this a very nice thing about Sweden.

■ Those who are skeptical about the moral progress of humanity must make an effort to ignore such heartening developments as the ASPCA program to create "no kill" cities. In San Francisco, for instance, the organization has announced that "no adoptable animal with a treatable disease will be euthanized and [ASPCA] will pay for medical care for an animal with a long-term health problem after it is adopted." Milwaukee, St. Louis, and New York are also taking steps toward becoming "no kill" cities. Now if we could only extend this caring vision to include human babies.

■ An alert reader in Kalamazoo, Michigan, says she sighted this Planned Parenthood billboard picturing a laughing and hugging young black couple and bearing the message, "Planned Parenthood. We're more than you think." They are obviously worried about what people think about the business they're in. They should be.

■ Thanks to an alert reader in Florida, I have here the venomous gushings of Steve Gushee, an Episcopal minister, who writes a religion column in the local tabloid. The Rev. Gushee is much exercised by Catholic bishops who are considering the reintroduction of meatless Fridays. "Can weekly confessions, fasting before communion, and knuckle-knocking nuns be far behind?" (Dare we hope?) The Second Vatican Council worked a revolution, according to Gushee. "Many discovered for the first time that religion was not meant to control their life but unleash it for unlimited growth." There you have it, *aggiornamento* as slipping the leash. Bernard Cardinal Law of Boston favors the fast, which prompts Gushee to write, "But Law is the kind of religious conservative who thinks the Spanish Inquisition was enlightened evangelism. . . . Some churchmen just can't get accustomed to the freedom and joy their faith proclaims." Nor others to the humility and charity that it enjoins.

■ Another in the "Whither Incest?" genre of public advocacy. The British medical journal *Lancet* runs an article titled, "Should organs from patients in permanent vegetative state be used for transplantation?" Such a shame to let the organs of those "vegetables," who are so expensive to care for, go to waste. After discussing at length the great benefits to be gained by killing off the incapacitated, the article concludes: "For religious, cultural, and other traditional reasons, it is likely that the proposal would be rejected; nevertheless, the arguments in favor are sufficiently compelling to justify serious debate." But, of course, serious debate is only justified on the premise that those religious, cultural, and other reasons are not compelling. The serious debaters assume the outcome of the debate.

■ These requests are a fairly regular thing, asking me to mention in this corner a conference that is coming up, a position that is open, tapes that are available, and on and on. But, dear friend, that's why we started the "classified" section a while back. Rates are reasonable, exposure is vast, and you can find out more about placing your ad by contacting Richard Vaughan, Publishing Management Associates, 129 Phelps Avenue, Suite 312, Rockford, *IL 61108*; phone *(815) 398-8569*; fax *(815) 398-8579*; e-mail Ravaughan@aol.com

■ The New Nationalists are coming! The New Nationalists are coming! That was last week's alarum. New Nationalism is the buzz term for a convergence of forces opposed to free trade that is bringing together Pat Buchanan, the Sierra Club, labor unions, and that funny little man from Texas. Inside the beltway it is viewed as a great threat, and terror was intensified when the new nationalists denied the President "fast track" authority in trade agreements. With that action, the world was transformed, if we believe Peter Beinart's long article on the subject in *The New Republic*. "Many things that seemed inevitable last week no longer do. And a lot of powerful people went to bed on Sunday night afraid of what they might wake up to." Think about

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it. Living in a world so small that a congressional vote means that many things you thought inevitable no longer are. Washington, as sober observers have long recognized, is not a city but a company town in which the only business is politics. One of the most debilitating factors in our intellectual life in the last quarter century is the number of publications and think tanks that have attracted to Washington people who are capable of thinking. I quickly add that some of them are my best friends, but they face formidable odds in a place where what Russell Kirk called "the permanent things" have a life expectancy of a week or less, until the next magazine deadline or congressional hearing. "Many things that seemed inevitable last week no longer do." Think about it.

■ Hadley Arkes went over the top, or so some said, when he suggested in these pages that we should brace ourselves for a Jewish and Christian Removal Act. He employed, to be sure, a touch of hyperbole, but the idea is not so farfetched. We are witnessing, in both government and corporate policies, an increasing exclusion or marginalization of religious folk who dissent from ruling secular orthodoxies. Major law firms do not appoint as partners or members of personnel committees anyone who is known to think, for example, that homosexuality is a grave disorder. Even if the person did not let that belief influence his decisions, why should the firm open itself to a discrimination suit? In Washington State a judge is threatened with impeachment for appearing at a pro-life meeting, although other judges routinely attend Planned Parenthood events. And now here is an AP story about a lesbian woman in Australia who has "won her right" to be a Catholic teacher. The Australian Human Rights and Equal Opportunities Commission has found the Archdiocese of Sydney guilty of discrimination because it would not certify as a teacher in the Catholic schools Jacqui Griffin, cofounder of the Gay and Lesbian Teachers and Students Association. Said Ms. Griffin, "The decision is only one of many steps needed to create a climate of tolerance and acceptance for gay and lesbian students in Catholic schools." And one more step toward a legal regime in which individuals and communities that dissent from prescribed opinion will not be tolerated. A Jewish and Christian Removal Act? A touch hyperbolic perhaps, but definitely not paranoid.

■ I have been accused from time to time of being too hard on our parish newspaper. Ha. Meet Roger Kimball, writing in the *New Criterion*. (Not, mind you, that I think he's being too hard.) Kimball writes: "'Of all horrible religions,' G. K. Chesterton once observed, 'the most horrible is the worship of the god within. . . . That Jones shall worship the god within him turns out ultimately to mean that Jones shall worship Jones.' We had occasion to ponder Chesterton's remark on Sunday, December 7, when the *New York Times Magazine* favored its readers with a special issue on religion. Elsewhere, the media was full of recollections about the bombing of Pearl Harbor—the event, as Franklin Roosevelt put it, that made December 7 'a date which will live in infamy.' For its part, the *Times* gave us 'God Decentralized,' a miscellany of a dozen or so short articles by divers hands on subjects ranging from the problems of interfaith marriages, young American Muslim girls who wear nose rings and baggy jeans, and the monthly meetings of the 'Freethought Association' in Talladega, Alabama, where 'devout atheists gather for their Sunday social.'" The caption on the cover of the magazine read, "Americans are still among the most religious people on the planet. But these days, they're busy inventing unorthodox ways to get where they're going." Kimball is not impressed by the truism of the first sentence, but it's the second that gets him going. "Then there is the second sentence, about 'inventing unorthodox ways' of practicing religion. 'Unorthodox' is a favorite word in this special issue—partly, no doubt, because spiral dances in the woods by Lake Geneva make for colorful copy. But the more important reason is that on all moral and religious matters the *Times* long ago declared itself an enemy of orthodoxy. Hence when it endeavors to cast a friendly eye on religion it winds up producing a carnival of psychobabble in which genuine religious feeling is indistinguishable from the most flagrant forms of pseudo-spirituality. Indeed, the conceptual muddle is precisely their point. For the *Times*, religion can go unchallenged only if (as one caption puts it) faith is an 'option,' an innocuous item in that great consumer smorgasbord that includes expensive shoes, exquisite chocolates, and churches in the Ozarks where real estate entrepreneurs dispense enlightenment along with mortgages and bedizen their chapel altars with the Star of David, images of Jesus, Shiva, Vishnu, and John F. Kennedy. We do not doubt that editors at the *Times* intended to produce a thoughtful reflection on religious diversity in contemporary America. What they have given us with 'God Decentralized,' however, is a grotesque parody in which religion emerges as little more than a matter of lifestyle, the latest form of equal-opportunity kitsch."

■ Viewed at one level, it's simply one more quirky entry in the what-won't-they-do-next sweepstakes. But I suspect there is something deeper at work. At a museum in Mannheim, Germany, there is an exhibition of corpses that is drawing huge crowds. A Dr. Gunther von Hagens has invented a method of "plastination" whereby skeletons can be displayed as though in various activities, with their muscle structure preserved to exhibit the complexity of the body. Among the exhibits is a woman with her womb gashed open to show a five-month-old fetus.

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Anti-abortionists have asked the doctor to plastinate other fetuses that can be used for educational purposes, but he says he doesn't want to be political. Protestant and Catholic religious leaders are protesting the entire exhibit as a desecration of the body. Catholic moral theologian Johannes Reiter of the University of Mainz says, "The Mannheim exhibition fits somewhere between art and commerce, one in which the likely damage to taboos has been factored in as a cost." The "likely damage to taboos," of course, gives the exhibition the panache of being "transgressive," a merit greatly valued in contemporary art. Reiter adds, "He who styles human corpses as a so-called work of art no longer respects the importance of death." The corpses on display are obtained from people who donate them for this purpose. The radically dualistic notion that the body is not oneself but is a thing that one can give away may be seen as a further extension of the donation of body parts for transplant purposes. If I can donate my body for medical purposes, why not for the purposes of "art"? It is, if not immortality, at least an extension of life in the denial of death. A few years ago there were stories about how many Germans no longer have funerals or even announce publicly that someone has died. The dead just disappear; one day they are no longer there, and everybody goes about their business as though nothing had happened. The Mannheim exhibition, then, can be seen both as a denial of death and as a denial of that denial in the return of the dead. It is a ghoulish business, but also a testimony to the profound wisdom of the biblical truth that we are to commend the dead to the elements from which they came, in the sure hope of the resurrection of the body. The Mannheim exhibit is a pathetically futile rejection of that truth further cheapened by pandering to the fashions of "shock art." It makes a kind of perverse sense in a gnostic culture in which the self is divorced from matter, and the body is a "thing" to be used for pleasure, entertainment, or, as Dr. von Hagens would have it, the education of the public. As he might say, a body is a terrible thing to waste. That assumes, of course, that the body is not inseparably part of a person with another destiny.

■ The title of the piece tells the story: "Abortion Now Divides Americans as Deeply as It Ever Has Since 1973—And in the Same Proportions." This is in *Public Perspective*, a publication of the Roper Center, and it summarizes a quarter century's polling of opinion on abortion. In 1987, according to one poll, 34 percent of Americans said abortion should be "a woman's decision in all cases," and 63 percent said abortion should be "legal only in extreme cases or illegal in all cases" (12 percent taking the last position). According to that poll (*Time*/CNN), the pro-abortion position reached a high of 47 percent in 1992 and in the same year the anti-abortion position dropped to a low 47 percent. Since then, the anti-abortion position has been gaining, but modestly so. A CNN/*USA Today* poll has 65 percent saying that abortion should not be "generally legal" in the second trimester, and that jumps to 82 percent in the third trimester. A poll sponsored by a consortium of media shows no difference between Protestants and Catholics. Thirty percent in 1992 said abortion should be "legal in all cases" and 21 percent said that in 1996. The Roper report does not include some polls commissioned by organizations directly involved in the abortion dispute that report significantly higher opposition to abortion. The Roper article is one more confirmation of the fact that, contra the Supreme Court and many others, the unlimited abortion license is supported by a small and declining minority of the public. What that means for the prospect of more protective laws, or even for personal behavior, is another question.

■ "Christian socialism is but the holy water with which the priest consecrates the heart-burnings of the aristocrat." At least that is how *The Communist Manifesto* puts the matter. There is something of a revival of talk about Christian socialism in the New Labor party of Tony Blair. Chris Bryant, a former priest in Latin America who pushed liberation theology and was later a Labor party official, is at the center of a new socialist talking group that meets at the posh Scott's restaurant on Mount Street. According to the *Spectator*'s Sion Simon, "The group is avowedly ecumenical, which in practice means much higher church than traditional Labor Christians, who tend to be dour left-wing Methodists." Simon doesn't think the group is socialist at all, just New Labor Christians. But on both sides of the drink there is a certain moral superiority attached to calling oneself socialist. After all, in conventionally dichotomous minds, the alternative is to be a capitalist. It was precisely the tone of moral superiority that I found off-putting, even in my youthful wanderings on the Left. It was somewhere around 1968 that I was at a fashionably liberal party at an elegant apartment on Central Park West and scandalized the host by remarking that I did not consider myself a socialist. "Surely," he insisted, "you agree that we live in an unjust world where the poor should have more of the necessities of life." When I allowed as how I did agree with that, he pronounced his satisfaction that I was a socialist after all. The entrance price into the socialist "constituency of conscience," as these folk liked to call themselves, seemed absurdly cheap. Of a colleague who fancied himself the keeper of the social conscience, the late Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel remarked that he was so confident of his righteousness that, if he died and was condemned to hell, he would assume he was sent there to save souls. I admit this is not an argument against socialism. The argument against socialism is that it is very bad

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for people, including poor people. I hope the *Spectator* is right in thinking that Chris Bryant and friends are not really socialists. The tragedy of liberation theology in Nicaragua would play as farce in London. Anyway, it appears that Mr. Blair aspires to being Bill Clinton, not Danny Ortega. Without the sleaze factor, of course. The oysters at Scott's are said to be excellent.

■ In a haughtily dismissive review of several recent books on the papacy, Patrick Collinson, writing in the *Times Literary Supplement,* notes that one, in its discussion of Pius XII, has the Croats being Orthodox and the Serbs being passionately Catholic. Collinson writes, "As *Private Eye* might put it, shorely shome mishtake here?" He does have the good sense to approve of Eamon Duffy's achievement in *Saints and Sinners: A History of the Popes.* But then he writes, "A Protestant might understand *Saints and Sinners* differently: all equally sinners and saints. In Luther's words, the Christian is 'simul justus ac peccator.'" As *Private Eye* might put it, Shorely . . .

■ "Averting Our Eyes from Slavery" is a forceful column by Nat Hentoff in the *Washington Post* excoriating American leaders, black and white, for their refusal to address the horror of slavery in North Africa. Our familiar critic Ibrahim Hooper of CAIR, "an Islamic advocacy group," excoriates Hentoff and others for fomenting "Islamophobia." A letter in the *Post* from the American Anti-Slavery Group, signed by Charles Jacobs and Dominic Mohammed, responds to CAIR: "In Mauritania, Islam is used to justify slavery. . . . In Sudan, an Islamic holy war mounted on the black Christian south employs slave raids. To know and to say these things is not anti-Arab or anti-Muslim: It's anti-slavery. Should we let the slaves languish in order not to offend extremists and terrorists?" With the possible exceptions of the Rev. Jesse Jackson, Minister Farrakhan, and the folks at CAIR, most everyone will recognize that as a rhetorical question.

■ U.S. District Judge Elizabeth Kovachevich says she finds it "difficult to conceive" how stories of miracles and resurrection could be taught as history. In a suit brought by the ACLU, she allowed the school board of Lee County, Florida, to offer courses on the Old Testament but not on the New. Apparently items such as the Red Sea, Sinai, and Elijah's raising of the widow's dead son all have perfectly natural explanations.

■ "Policies that restrict access to abortion not only deter pregnant women from obtaining abortions, but also deter women from becoming pregnant in the first place." That is the complaint expressed in a recent issue of *Family Planning Perspectives.* It is one of many statements that greatly heartens Mark Crutcher of Life Dynamics Incorporated, a Texas organization that presses malpractice suits against abortionists. He has put together a remarkable booklet (*Access: The Key to Pro-Life Victory*) that includes numerous statements by pro-abortionists who contend that, even without any change in the law, the abortion industry is being terminated by the shortage of medical terminators. For the booklet and more information, write Life Dynamics at P.O. Box 2226, Denton, TX 76202.

■ . . . where angels fear to tread. But here I go into an explosive dispute among Jewish thinkers. Elliott Abrams, Michael Horowitz, Michael Medved, and some other Jews have written a letter to the director of the Holocaust Museum in Washington protesting the depiction of Christianity in a film that is shown there on the origins of anti-Semitism. They complain that the film unfairly and simplistically blames Christianity. For instance, it depicts without comment Hitler claiming that, in his effort to rid the world of Jewish influence, he is only completing the work started by the Church. The letter of protest greatly excited Leon Wieseltier of *The New Republic.* The writers—whom Wieseltier, ever the gentleman, calls "fools"—noted the film's omission of any reference to "the brave anti-Nazi resistance groups comprised of Catholic and Protestant clerics and leaders." Wieseltier reacts: "They adduce 'righteous Gentiles,' unaware of the terrible admission that is contained in that honorific." What terrible admission is that? That most Christians were not heroes, which is what "righteous Gentiles" is intended to connote? Wieseltier continues: "And they cite Dietrich Bonhoeffer, of course. They are not aware that in 1933 he reported that, in the matter of the Jews, 'the most sensible people have lost their heads and their entire Bible.'" Note the scornful "of course." Wherever he got that Bonhoeffer quote, it is subject to benign interpretation. But is his point that Bonhoeffer—who was killed for, among other things, rescuing Jews—was not a righteous Gentile? If so, he would seem to be aligning himself with Daniel Goldhagen's *Hitler's Willing Executioners,* even though it was Wieseltier, I assume, who commissioned his magazine's devastating review of that slanderous tract. His conclusion is of particular interest: "They [the writers of the letter] declare that 'the film repeats and propagates libels of Christianity.' Libels! These Jews are conservatives who have made a career out of the charge of 'moral equivalence.' Do they know anything about the history of 'libel' in the entanglements between Christians and Jews? This is not only error. It is also dishonor." Wieseltier's reference to moral equivalence implies that Jews are responsible for the film in question, which may well be the case, although the Holocaust Museum is presumably a national and not just a Jewish institution. There is no doubt that many Christians did, and some still do, libel Jews. Does this mean that it is not possible for Jews to libel Christians and Christianity? That

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Daniel Goldhagen is not possible? That Wieseltier's apparent contempt for Dietrich Bonhoeffer is not possible? Such a line of argument is not only incoherent. It is also hysterical.

■ "I'm History" is Joseph Epstein's 92nd and last essay as editor of *American Scholar*. As noted here earlier, the Phi Beta Kappa's Senate fired him for refusing to toe the line of what Epstein calls O.K.isms—multiculturalism, radical feminism, queer theory, speech-act theory, victimhoodism, and other excitements that only intellectuals could take seriously. Very serious, however, is their devastating impact on institutions such as *American Scholar*. Writing in the *Baltimore Sun*, columnist Michael Packenham recalls a 1991 essay by Epstein in the *Hudson Review*, "The Academic Zoo: Theory—in Practice." There he depicted the political program of tenured radicals: "It is an intellectual version of the Whole Earth Catalog—a pallid, boiled-down, warmed-over, unisexual, blandified Woodstockian version of heaven on earth. Heaven for them, as I see it, hell for the rest of us." You can see why Joseph Epstein didn't fit in. Packenham concludes: "Get angry. Get active. Write. Shout. Demand. Complain. Campaign. Withhold contributions and other support. Ridicule and torment. The alternative is passive collaboration in the trashing of what's left of the liberal tradition, the wan hope of civilization." I don't know about anger, shouting, complaining, and the such, and I would want to add prayer to the list of things to be done, but he is certainly right about the liberal tradition, rightly understood.

■ All the scholarly tomes devoted to trying to make sense of the many parts of Christianity in America can now be safely ignored since Bruce Bawer has come up with a taxonomy that cuts through the complexities. There are really only two groups according to Mr. Bawer, the liberal churches of love and the conservative churches of law. There you have it. Bawer is author, most recently, of *Stealing Jesus: How Fundamentalism Betrays Christianity* (Crown), a book with the merit of having a nuanced title that will assure most people that they can safely spare themselves the trouble of reading it. Before that, he wrote *A Place at the Table*, a spirited apologia for the religious acceptance of homosexuality. Now, writing in the *Times*, Mr. Bawer is upset at the very positive response to Robert Duvall's remarkable film, *The Apostle*. He allows that Duvall turns in a magnificent performance, but faults the film for its favorable portrayal of Pentecostalism, a religion that, he notes, teaches the inerrancy of the Bible and the damnation of the unsaved. "Most telling, the official faith statements of the Pentecostal Holiness Church cite Christ's Great Commission—to evangelize the world—but omit his Great Commandment, to love God and one's neighbor." Duvall's film, he complains, depicts Pentecostalists as loving when we all know that they are hate-filled fanatics. On somewhat more solid ground (it could not help but be more solid since his main allegation is preposterous) he notes that in the film nobody is seen speaking in tongues. "Doubtless Mr. Duvall has omitted this sensational—but crucial—aspect of Pentecostalism for fear of alienating moviegoers," says Bawer. It is hardly doubtless, although it is possible. What Mr. Bawer makes doubtless is his own fury at a film that might lead an uncritical public to think that law and love are not mutually exclusive.

■ "If we listen to these opinions, we are likely to come to two conclusions. The first is that many homosexuals are correct to suggest that they, perhaps more than any other group in America, are severely stigmatized. But the second is that those Americans who have qualms about homosexuality are also correct if they believe their views to be widely shared." What I think Alan Wolfe of Boston University means to say on the second point is that those who have qualms about homosexuality are correct in believing that their views are widely shared. That was his finding in a recent study he discusses in the *New York Times Magazine*. Because I know Wolfe to be an intelligent fellow, I expect he's being a bit disingenuous—just disingenuous enough to get his article past the thought police at the *Times*—when he suggests there is a tension between the "Thou shalt not judge" tolerance of most Americans and their continuing aversion to homosexuality. He craftily insinuates into his article three reasons why that combination of attitudes may make sense. First, people perceive that homosexual activists want not only tolerance but moral approval of their way of life. Second, the predatory actions of some homosexuals, especially in relation to children, occasion understandable fear. Third, the rhetoric of gay liberation that presents homosexuality as "socially constructed" and a matter of choice makes "people feel that they have the similar choice of condemning it." "There is no culture war in America," Wolfe wrongly asserts, "but on the question of gay rights, fairly severe battles are likely to be fought for the foreseeable future." Which being translated means that most Americans will never extend their general tolerance to homosexuality. In forums where free speech is not so limited, the reason is not hard to state. Unlike the case of, say, blacks or Jews, the "gay community" is defined exclusively and without remainder by what people *do*, and what they do is deemed to be wrong. The last-ditch argument of gay activists is that they are driven by uncontrollable desire. Whether with regard to alcohol, gambling, violent anger, adultery, homosexual temptation, or something else, most people think they know about desires that sometimes seem uncontrollable. They are reluctant to approve

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the proposition that people should act on such desires, which is the core proposition of the homosexual movement. I expect Mr. Wolfe knows that, too, and he therefore knows as well that there is no paradox at all in the general tolerance of most Americans and their disapproval of homosexuality.

■ The television channel Comedy Central has this cartoon program called *South Park*, created by Trey Parker, who has said, "I can guarantee it's gonna be the raunchiest thing on TV and it's gonna p--- a lot of people off." A recent episode had "Jesus" and "Satan" in a boxing match. The bout, accompanied by sexually explicit songs, ends up with "Satan" winning and "Jesus" complaining that he lost because everyone bet against him. Bill Donohue of the Catholic League is, as you might expect, unhappy with this. One might also expect that the sophisticated editors at certain publications will again take Donohue to task for lacking both a sense of humor and theological insight. "It is all too often the case that Jesus does lose and Satan does win," one anticipates their editorial opining, "because deep down we are all guilty of betting on the power of evil." As for the foul language, "mature Christians understand that the drama of the gospel must be depicted in the realistic context of the world as we find it, not as we wish it to be." And so forth. As has been oft remarked, a liberal is someone who refuses to take his own side in an argument. Donohue, on the other hand, thinks the program is out to offend Christians, for which there is no penalty in Mr. Parker's world. Donohue issues a challenge: "To those who say that *South Park* is just a cartoon, I have a suggestion. Write to Mr. Parker and ask him to deliver the same message of blasphemy, sex, and violence by substituting Martin Luther King for Jesus and Bull Connor for Satan. After all, that should tick a lot of people off, too." That is a dangerous challenge, as Parker might just take him up on it. There would be an awful fuss, of course, and he might lose his job, but he would have the satisfaction of having proved himself perversely brave. It would not do much to lift popular culture out of the gutter, although it would give some editors the opportunity to discover something that is simply beyond the pale. They might even be tempted by the frisson of being accused of censoriousness, for it must be a terrible bore to be inexhaustibly understanding toward the banal pranks of the avant garde.

■ Elevating the level of public discourse. That's a fine phrase, and we sometimes employ it in explaining what we're trying to do here. There are those who think it means using more religion-talk in public, which is not quite right. For instance, Vice President Al Gore recently gave a talk on race relations that is laced with biblical references. Those who oppose racial quotas, he said, are hypocrites who refuse to recognize that the sin of racism persists. "The Gospel of Luke tells us of Jesus' reaction to people who willfully refuse to see the evidence before their eyes." Jesus addressed them as "ye hypocrites." In Washington State 280,000 people have signed an initiative for the November ballot that would ensure "the state shall not discriminate against, or grant preferential treatment to, any individual or group on the basis of race, sex, color, ethnicity, or national origin in the operation of public employment, public education, or public contracting." (Private businesses and organizations are free to do as they wish with preferences.) But according to the Vice President, there you see 280,000 hypocrites at work. Ditto for the majority of voters in California when the same question was posed in the last election. Ditto for the great majority of Americans, according to every poll. Cut through the cant about there being legitimate arguments pro and con. The brutal fact is that we are a nation of hypocrites. This does not seem like a promising way for the Vice President of the United States, who may soon be the President of the United States, to elevate the level of public discourse.

■ "Ask the persecuted." That is always good advice when one encounters the argument that protesting persecution "will only make matters worse." That argument is regularly advanced by those opposing the Wolf-Specter bill known as the Religious Persecution Act. Elliott Abrams of the Ethics and Public Policy Center very ably takes on that argument in the center's publication *American Purpose*. His essay is titled "Nazi Gold and Chinese Christians" and concludes with this: "Will we allow commercial objectives to dictate national policy? Will we really contrive to ignore the Laogai, the slave-labor system in which China's rulers imprison millions of men and women in eleven hundred camps? Will we spend Mondays tut-tutting about how the Europeans sought only money and ignored persecution in the 1930s, only to seek money and ignore persecution yet again on Tuesdays? The analogy is no doubt weak in a number of ways, but it has great strength in another: for the real comparison being drawn is not between Nazi gold and Chinese Christians, but between Western reactions then and Western reactions now. What if the Swiss had said then, 'This is wrong, it is monstrous, and we will have no part of it. We will not do business as usual'? While we are in the midst of condemning them for not saying that, we might pause a moment and think twice about just what we are saying to China's millions of political prisoners and to Christians, Tibetan Buddhists, and Muslims there. Fifty years from now, will Chinese thank us—as today Poles and Czechs do—for helping them win their freedom? Or will we be compared to the Swiss, who loved gold more than they hated persecution?"

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■ There he goes again. The story in the San Francisco paper says that Father Andrew Greeley has "an acerbic wit with a self-described 'shanty Irish mouth,'" and this time he is putting his talents in the service of ABC in its defense of the program *Nothing Sacred.* He appeared on a panel with Father Bill Cain, the Jesuit cowriter of the series. The only criticism they had of ABC is that the network delayed the broadcast of an episode dealing with a priest who is HIV-positive. Greeley is scornful of the Catholic League, which has been lambasting the series. He says, "I don't know anyone else that's criticized it. I don't know of any other person or group claiming a Catholic voice that has been opposed to it." Fr. Greeley is a professor of sociology. He and two other priests on the panel asserted that *Nothing Sacred* is a terrific advertisement for Catholicism. Fr. Cain was more correct: "The show is not designed to get anybody into a Catholic church. The show is designed to tell stories. I didn't start to write a show in order to proselytize." Apparently it would be a violation of artistic integrity to serve the Church. Fr. Cain may also be more cautious these days, since, under the implied threat of a lawsuit, he had to write a letter of apology to Dr. Bill Donohue of the Catholic League withdrawing his charge that Donohue had said Jews had no right to work on a show about Catholicism. Donohue never said any such thing. There may be nothing sacred, but some things are still libelous.

■ Steven Pinker's *How the Mind Works* has received extensive notice in these pages, as has his argument that we should try to be more understanding toward people who commit infanticide—or "neonaticide," as he prefers. One should always hope for worthy adversaries, even though the hope is so regularly disappointed. On the subject of religion and morality, I am afraid it turns out that Professor Pinker exposes himself as a bigot and a deeply confused ignoramus. Writing in the *Weekly Standard,* Andrew Ferguson posited against Pinker's position on neonaticide the ancient view of Christians that "human beings were persons from the start, endowed with a soul, created by God, and infinitely precious." Pinker rejoins that appeals to religion will not help in solving our moral dilemmas. The opposite is the case. "That solution," he writes, "has given us stonings, witch-burnings, crusades, inquisitions, jihads, suicide bombers, abortion-clinic gunmen, and mothers who drown their children so they can be happily reunited in heaven." Some people who believe that people have souls have done horrible things, ergo we should not believe that people have souls, or something like that. In fact, it seems Prof. Pinker knows that people do not have souls. "Unfortunately for that theory, brain science has shown that the mind is what the brain does. The supposedly immaterial soul can be bisected with a knife, altered by chemicals, turned on or off by electricity, and extinguished by a sharp blow or a lack of oxygen. Centuries ago it was unwise to ground morality on the dogma that the earth sat at the center of the universe. It is just as unwise today to ground it on dogmas about souls endowed by God." The logic would seem to be that there is no immaterial soul because the material brain can be bisected with a knife, etc. Slam dunk. And one must stand in amazement at Steven Pinker's apparent agreement with the view of the intellectual and scientific establishment of Galileo's time that their morality depended on the dogma of an earth-centered universe. Regrettably, some church officials uncritically went along with the establishment view of the day, which is a salutary caution against doing the same with the Pinkers of our time.

■ "The media is sliding not only down the scale of respectability, but also back toward its disreputable roots. In his classic work *The Civilization of the Renaissance in Italy,* the historian Jacob Burckhardt identified Pietro Aretino, the sixteenth-century blackmailer and pornographer, as 'the father of modern journalism.' Aretino's method was simple. He published a kind of newsletter with a wide circulation. If you paid him off, he praised you in the most extravagant terms. If you didn't, he attacked you viciously and obscenely." That's from Richard Brookhiser's column in the *New York Observer.* The historical reference might come in handy in discussions of current affairs, which used to be called talking dirty.

■ First there is assisted suicide, and then there is assisted grieving for suicides. Hallmark cards of Kansas City has come out with a line of cards for the suicide market. The idea has been tested in six cities, with the cards appearing on shelves under a "suicide" category. The company reports "an overwhelmingly positive response." The news item does not say whether there will be the usual sideline of humorous cards. ("Hooray! She finally did it!") Hallmark's decision is a testimony to the infinite creativity of capitalism, and to our culture's continuing determination to mainstream the aberrant in the hope that the very concept of the aberrant will one day be eliminated.

■ Judge Lawrence E. Walsh earned a reputation for prosecutorial ruthlessness when he was independent counsel for the Iran-Contra affair, a story painfully documented by one of his victims, Elliott Abrams, in his book *Undue Process.* Now Judge Walsh is a leader of the pack attacking independent counsel Kenneth Starr. His lead article in a recent issue of the *New York Review of Books* is accompanied by a cover cartoon picturing Mr. Starr holding hammer and spikes and seated beside a large wooden cross. Think about it. The editorial judgment is as execrable as Judge Walsh's current disservice to justice.

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■ There have been forty-six of them, but this was the first time I was in attendance at a National Prayer Breakfast. I was in Washington the evening before to receive the William Wilberforce Award from Prison Fellowship and stayed over for the breakfast, which has become a major institution since it was established during the Eisenhower years. Some four thousand people from more than 160 countries, or so the brochure says, gather under mainly evangelical auspices to invoke God's blessings on the nation, which is no doubt a very good thing to do. The event is held in connection with the annual convention of the National Religious Broadcasters, making this the largest assembly of the leadership of evangelicaldom short of the anticipated rapture. Attendance by the President is mandatory and this year Clinton came in the midst of the latest scandal of sex and lies, looking nervous and almost penitent. He read from 1 Kings 3: "And now, O Lord my God, thou hast made thy servant king in place of David my father, although I am but a little child; I do not know how to go out or come in. . . ." The Vice President led a prayer in which he alluded to the pluralism of our society and cited John 17, "that they may all be one," which is an interesting ecclesiological twist. The applause for Clinton was tepid, with a good number of us standing for the office but not applauding the man. There was no applause at all when the President and his party shuffled off the stage. The silence was impressive. The applause greeting Billy Graham, on the other hand, was loud and long. Contrary to some press reports, Graham did not "absolve" Clinton but offered a carefully crafted prayer reminding us that we are all sinners, which nobody seemed inclined to contest. Most of the prayers were offered "in your name," leaving unspecified just whose name was being invoked. Presumably it is a matter of sensitivity to the Jews, Buddhists, Hindus, and nonbelievers in attendance. The booklet handed out contains the chiefly banal remarks of Presidents and others who have spoken at past breakfasts. I notice that Mother Teresa's more pointed remarks about abortion a few years ago are not included in the printed excerpt. There is a section titled, "Thoughts on Jesus' Message to Be Considered." The selections are strictly moral and might well have been chosen by that great bowdlerizer of the New Testament, Thomas Jefferson. The National Prayer Breakfast is a grand, some might say gross, exercise in civic religion. I am not entirely disdainful of civic religion, but I could not help but notice that in attendance were some prominent evangelical critics of "Evangelicals and Catholics Together" who relentlessly castigate us for not dotting every "i" and crossing every "t" of theological exactitude. But here they were together, brothers and sisters with all and sundry, praying to a mainly unknown, or at least unnamed, god. It gives one pause for thought.

■ Week after week Monsignor George Higgins churns out his columns for the Catholic diocesan press. His formidable energy over these many years cannot help but elicit admiration. It is regrettable that in recent years he seems unable to get through a column without attacking those awful "neoconservatives." This week's column takes note of an important new book by Thomas Frank, *The Culture of Cool: Business Culture, Counterculture, and the Rise of Hip Consumerism* (University of Chicago Press). Frank's point is that since the 1960s corporate America has exploited to the hilt the decadent fashions of a counterculture that is, in fact, the cultural establishment. Exactly. Inexplicably, Msgr. Higgins thinks Frank's argument discredits neoconservatives who "flatly refuse to put any of the blame for the [cultural] problem on corporate America. They prefer to blame it on what they call the 'new class' of liberal intellectuals." I don't know where Msgr. Higgins has been, but as one who is regularly dubbed a neocon (I have absolutely no investment in the label) I should point out that over the years I and others such as Irving Kristol, Peter Berger, and Michael Novak have written repeatedly and at length about corporate America's domination by the "new class" and its exploitation of the pseudo-rebellion of the counterculture in order to make big bucks. Higgins writes, "The moral corruption that neoconservatives condemn in American society owes more to commercial imperatives than to the failures of some autonomous culture. . . . It was bankers, investors, real estate developers, and manufacturers—not liberal intellectuals—who made these mistakes." I don't know what an "autonomous culture" might be, but as for liberal intellectuals, from whom does Msgr. Higgins suppose the bankers et al. get their ideas? His simplistic either/or between intellectuals and corporate leadership rather completely misses the import of Frank's book: leftist intellectuals shape the fashions, including the fashion of being anti-business, which are then profitably coopted by corporate leadership. By now I nearly despair of changing the mind of my friend George Higgins, but let it be said once again: Support for free enterprise is perfectly compatible with criticizing the rascals who are largely in charge of it.

■ It didn't start with the Clintons, of course. Push the point far enough and one must admit that it started with that unfortunate afternoon in the garden. But without doubt we are witnessing a marked increase in the general tawdriness of our public culture. Pat Moynihan came up with the nice phrase, "defining deviancy down." Alternatively, it is the raising of the "yuck" threshold. Back in my college days, the ordinarily phlegmatic Dr. "Big George" Beto at Concordia in Austin, Texas, would wax eloquent on the infamy of the Duke of Windsor who, having shirked his duty, was consigned to a life of pitiable celebrity. That came to mind this

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morning with a full page ad in the *Times*, titled "A Royal Occasion." The supposedly royal occasion is that Sotheby's is holding an auction of the Duke and Duchess' personal effects. "Own a piece of royal history," says the ad, which notes that some items will go for "as low as $100." It is very low indeed. For as little as $500 you can own a pair of red velvet shoes worn by the Duchess. (As it turned out, most items sold for many times more than the auctioneers anticipated. More the pity.) "Net proceeds from the auction of the Collection of the Duke and Duchess of Windsor will benefit the Dodi Fayed International Charitable Foundation." Of course. How wondrous the cunning of history that perfectly closes the circle by bringing together these four who reduced public dignity to kitsch. "A former king and his love," as the ad puts it, together with Dodi, a playboy who lived off his father's billions and achieved notoriety by getting killed in a car crash with a deeply confused young woman celebrated for trashing the family that was her only claim to public notice. A royal occasion? Hardly. It is a matter of exploiting the detritus of parasitical lives that drew their glitteringly shabby sustenance from the connections they betrayed. And all this, mind you, under the auspices of Sotheby's, which styles itself the world's most distinguished dealer in finer things. P. T. Barnum would be embarrassed. And Big George Beto, may he rest in peace, would explain once again the inexorable connections between duty and dignity, between dishonor and tackiness.

■ Now in his ninetieth year, Dr. Erik Kuehnelt-Leddihn is undertaking another American lecture tour this October-November. A Roman Catholic who contends that much of the best in Catholicism is owed to Luther, a dissenter from liberalism who makes an engaging argument as to why he is not a conservative, Dr. Kuehnelt-Leddihn is one of the more ingenious intellects of our time, and a good friend. For bookings, write him at A-6072, Lans, Tyrol, Austria.

■ When asked—and I am asked with some degree of frequency—I always say that the *New Oxford Review* is better than you might think from those sensationalist ads for it that you see, it seems, almost everywhere (including here). One fears, however, that the gap between hype and reality might be narrowing. "The Church is at a major crossroads in her history," begins an editorial announcing that *NOR* is from now on going to increase the number of pages in each issue. It appears the editor has been talking with "orthodox Catholics" who are getting cold feet. They caution that "it's entirely possible we'll get a Bernardin-style Pope" (referring to the late Archbishop of Chicago) who will wimp out on the hard questions. "In orthodox Catholic publishing," we are told, "some of our astute colleagues have apparently decided to take a low profile or in effect sit on the sidelines." They think it is "imprudent to alienate the people who may one day soon be running the Church." Tell me it ain't so, Deal Hudson at *Crisis*, Phil Lawler at *Catholic World Report*. *Et tu*, Father Fessio? Not to fear, however. Editor Dale Vree is standing tall. "We at the *NOR* refuse to be an accomplice to that. We will keep our light burning—and in full view—come what may. The savvy game plan devised by certain of our orthodox colleagues has not diverted us from our purpose, and will not. So, beginning with this issue, the *NOR* has forty pages (instead of thirty-two) and will continue to have forty pages indefinitely into the future. . . . Yes, our strategy is risky, both financially and in terms of further alienating powerful people, but we feel called . . . to forge ahead—and we will go forward with the signature words of John Paul's pontificate, 'Be Not Afraid,' ever in our minds and hearts." One pictures those powerful people with their savvy game plan gathered in a glitzy corporate board room: "Gentlemen, despite our warnings, Vree says he's going ahead with the forty pages. We've got to stop him before he corners the market on Catholic orthodoxy." I have always appreciated the Dale Vree of two minds, the one that writes those silly ads and the one that edits a generally sensible *NOR*. And I cannot help but respect a magazine whose survey of its own readers indicates that the favorite publication of the overwhelming majority is First Things. It is with the friendliest of intentions, then, that I express the hope that Mr. Vree will not get his minds together. Unless, of course, it would mean that the ads become as sensible as the magazine generally is.

■ *We will be pleased to send a sample issue of this journal to people you think are likely subscribers. Please send names and addresses to* First Things, *156 Fifth Avenue, Suite 400, New York, NY 10010 (or e-mail to Ravaughan@aol.com). On the other hand, if they're ready to subscribe, call toll-free 1-800-783-4903.*

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